ARTIST'S

BACK TO BASICS

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INSPIRATIONAL FEATURE
DEPICTING PEOPLE

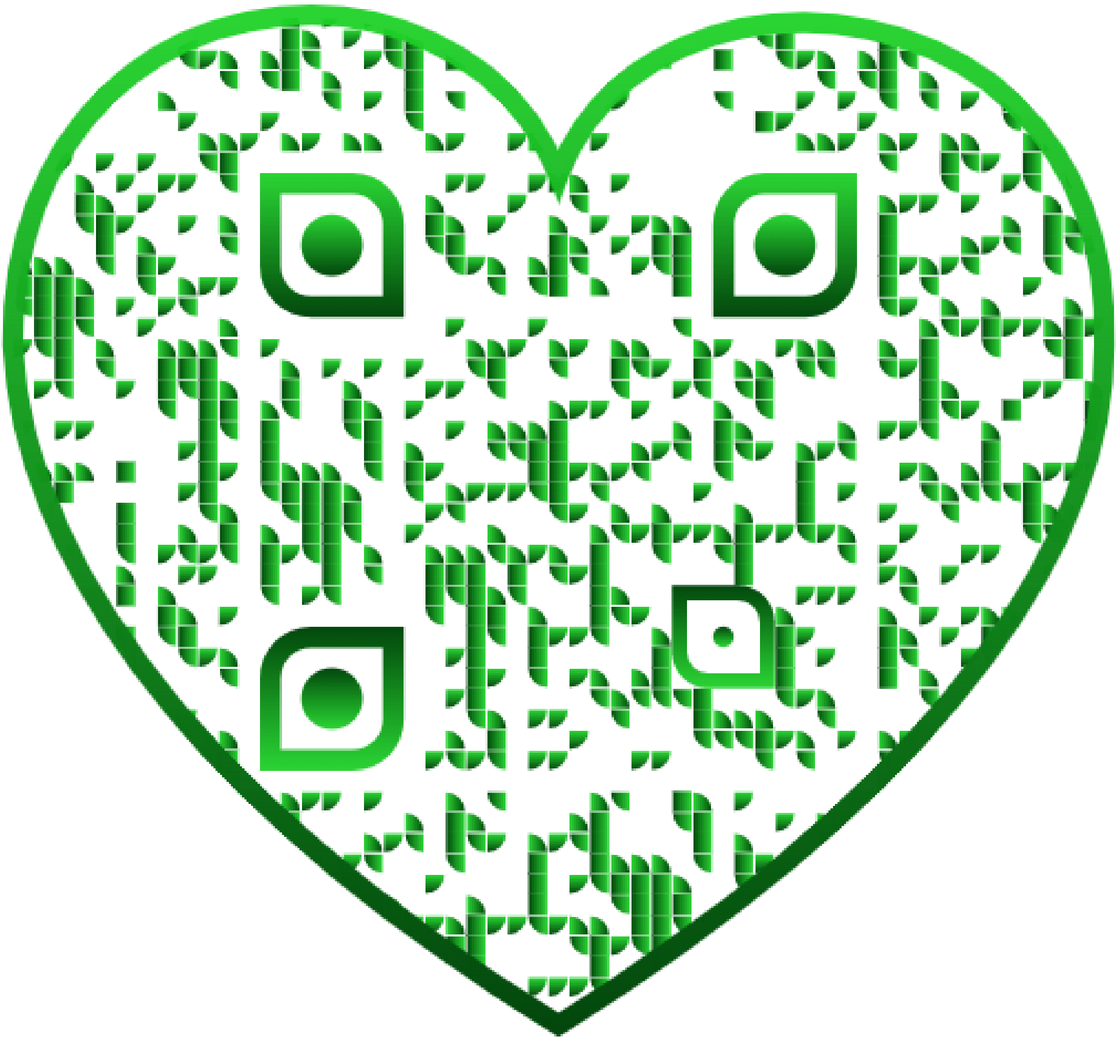
PRODUCT REVIEW
ALL ABOUT CANVASES

MARK IT WITH A BRUSH
WITH MARK WALLER

PENCILS DOWN
WITH BRETT A. JONES

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD
SETTING UP YOUR SPACE

FULL OF TIPS, IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES



ARTISTS DRY GROUND PIGMENT
Red Oxide
120 ml
LANGRIDGE ARTIST COLOURS
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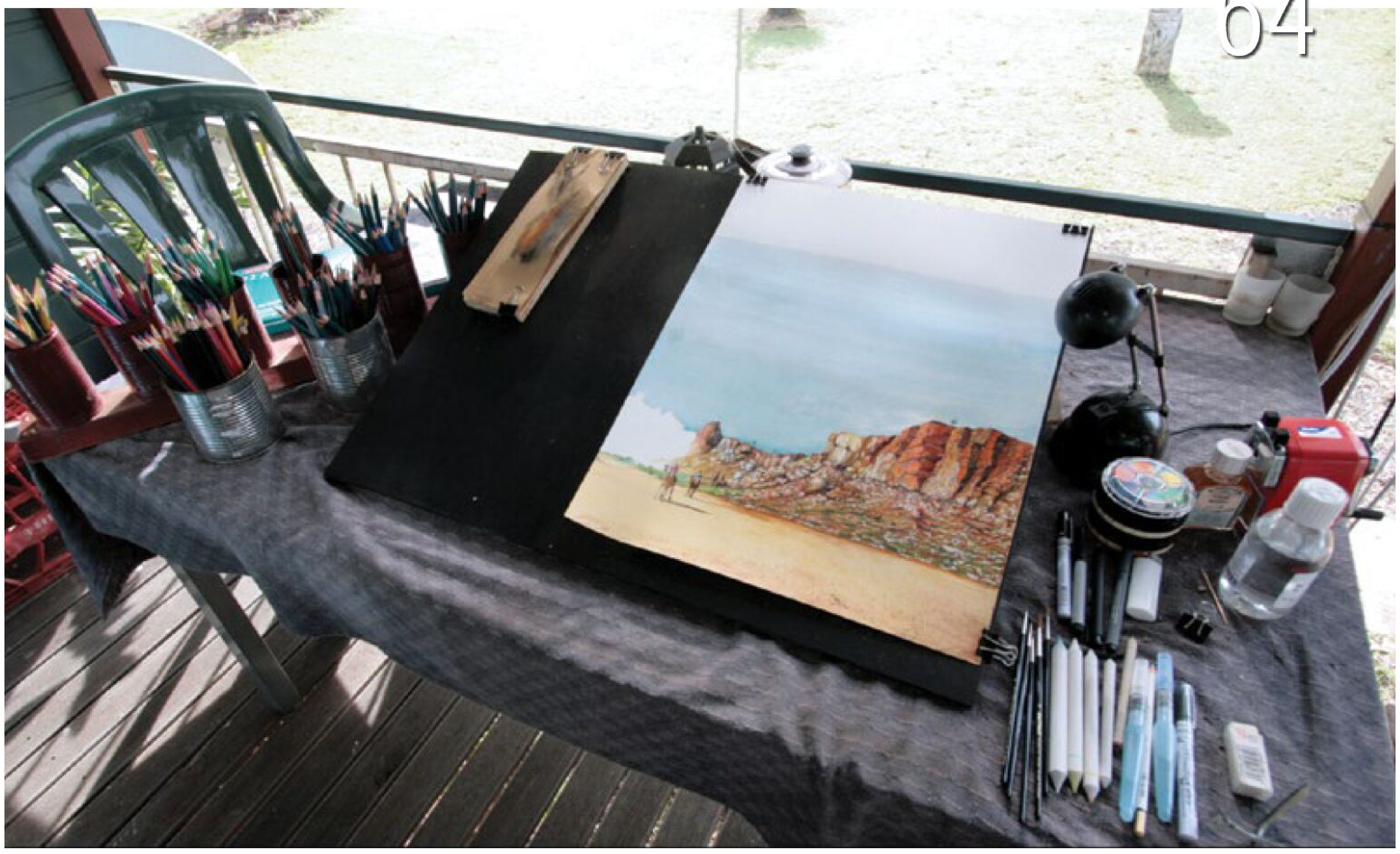

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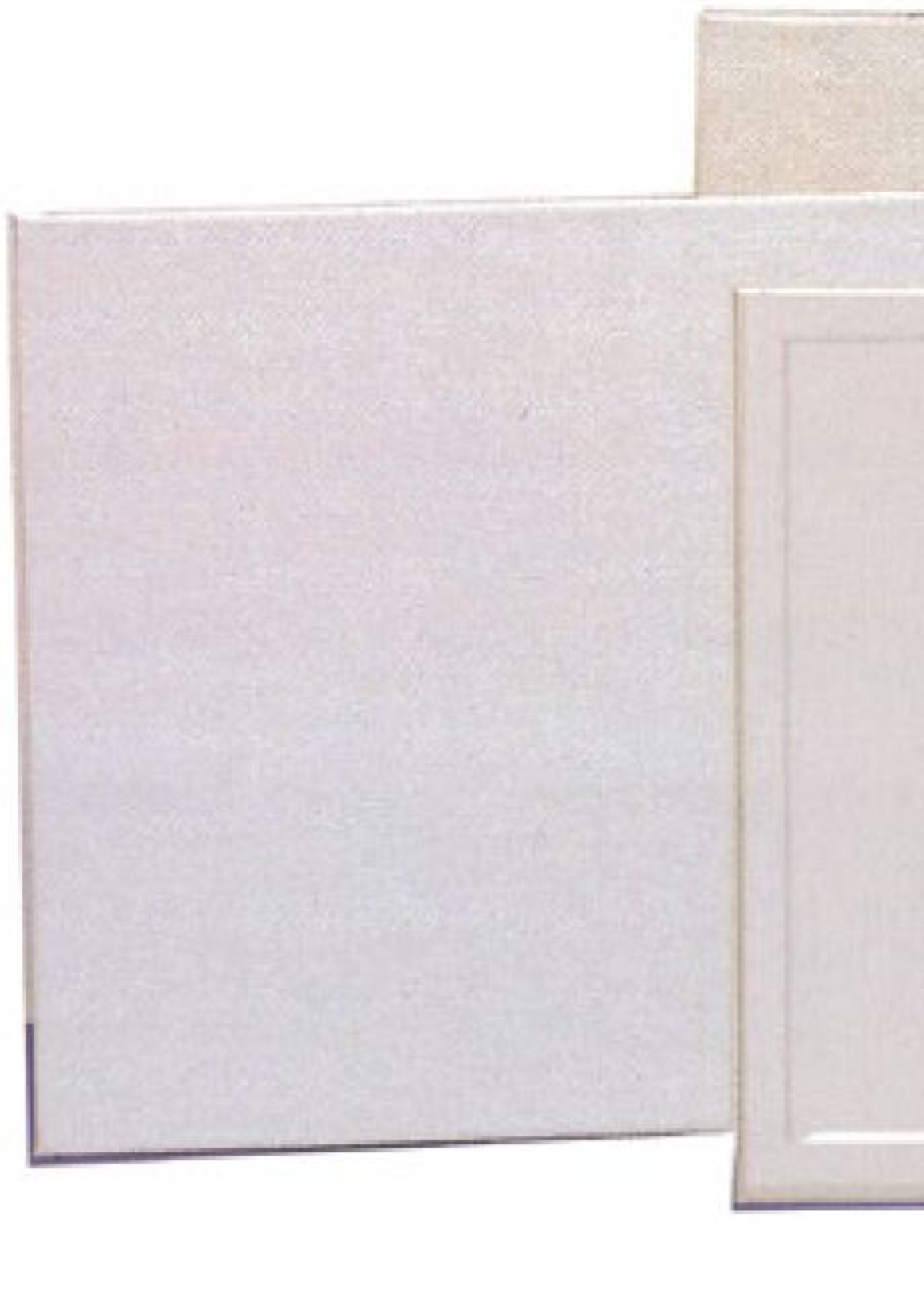

**Cover image by:
Maria Green**

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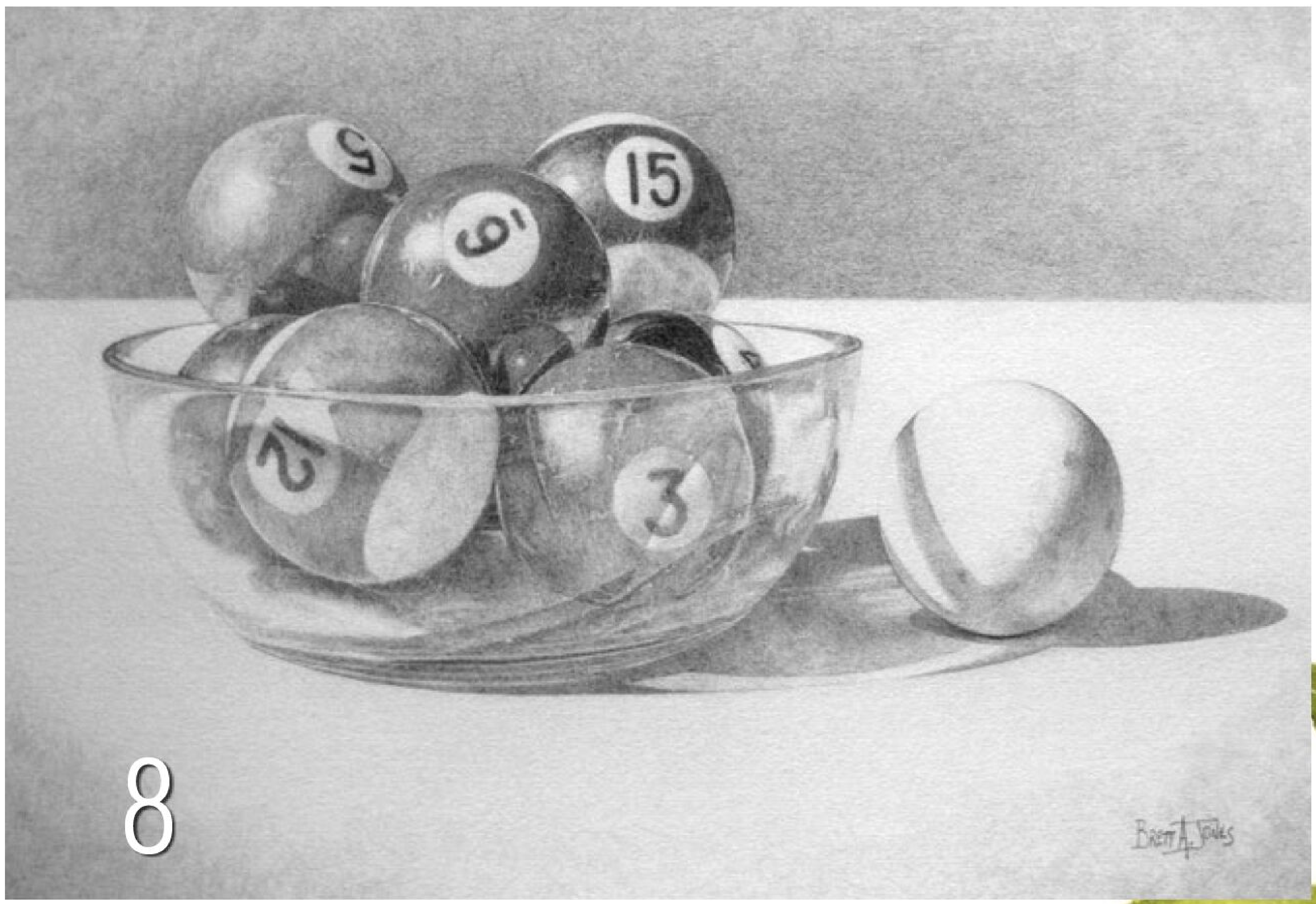
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A History of Pigments

by M.A Hunt

From the ritual of body decoration in dance to the hand forever etched onto an ancient rock wall and then forward into modern painting, where would the human race be without pigments to express ourselves?

Pigments are the basis of all paint, formed originally by using different colours of ground clay, earth and rocks. They were made into a paint medium by mixing with animal fat or human saliva.

For such an interesting and fertile subject, there is only time in this article to discuss some of the basic pigments which would be found in an artist's pallet.

Ochre and red oxides are some of the oldest pigments used by human kind. Evidence of ochre has been found in ancient burial sites such as Lake Mungo in Australia, where bones dated to around 65,000 years ago were found to be painted in ochre earth pigments. Ochre is usually a yellow or brown colour, and pigments can extend into purple and red hues. The mineral which creates this pigment is known as limonite,which is non-toxic (unlike many other pigments). Red,yellow, white and brown ochres are found throughout central and northern Australia, and have produced some of the most beautiful works of art by many Aboriginal artists such as Rover Thomas. Another example of ochre painting can be seen in the early work of Lilly Karedada, whose Wanjina spirits are painted in pink, white and brown ochre pigments. Early Aboriginal work was painted on bark strips, a technique that is still practiced today.

Terre Verte

Over 2000 years ago in northern China, in the period known as the "Han Dynasty," pigments called Han Purple and Han Blue (also known as Chinese purple and Chinese blue) were developed. These pigments were developed by using Azurite. Although a blue pigment was also developed simultaneously in Egypt, and found on the wall paintings of Mesopotamia and Rome, the current scholarship maintains that the differences in chemical composition, including the lack of lead in the Chinese pigment, suggest they developed independently. It has been theorized that the Chinese Taoist alchemists developed Han blue

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during their experiments with glass making. A famous example of the use of Han blue is in painted details on the Terracotta Army of the Qin Dynasty. Many examples of Chinese blue and white export ware (found in archeological sites and ancient ship wrecks) from the time of the Han onward point to a thriving trade between China and the rest of Asia and South East Asia. The variations in the pigments in the ceramics are often used to date and identify aspects of archaeological digs.

A basic carbonate of copper found in many parts of the world in the upper oxidized layers of copper deposits forms the base material for Azurite. “Mountain Blue”, “Blue verditer” or “lapis armenius” are names given to the blue pigment which became so important throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance in Europe. It was another blue called Ultramarine, which was both rare and expensive, which was sought after by the illustrators of the illuminated manuscripts of the European Middle Ages. This exotic and complex mineral pigment was made from Lapis Lazuli . Ultramarine translates as “beyond the sea”, with reference to the semi-precious stone being imported from Asia. Lapis Lazuli was first used in the seventh and eighth century in Afghanistan in Buddhist cave temples, examples of which survive in the remains of Kizil (the thousand Buddha caves). Examples of Lapis Lazuli pigment can be found also in both Chinese and Indian painting from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It begins to be seen in Anglo-Saxon illuminated manuscripts from the twelfth Century. Ultramarine was reserved for the most important paintings in the Middle Ages in Europe. At one time, Lapis Lazuli became more expensive than gold. These days, Ultramarine is made by a synthetic process which produces a very vivid result.

The Chinese were credited with the invention of Vermillion red (an orange reddish pigment) originally made from Cinnibar. Another artist pigment to be found in most artists’ paint boxes is Alizarin Crimson. Originally known as “Alizarin Madder Lake” it was made from the European Madder root, Rubia tinctorum. In the nineteenth century synthetic pigments replaced the original recipe. Alizerine pigments are lightfast in their pure form, but when they are mixed with other pigments such as Raw Umber , Ochre, and Sienna, they may change or fade with exposure to UV light.

The Egyptians and Romans developed lead white, which continued to be the only white used in European painting until the nineteenth century. Lead white strongly absorbs X-rays, making it easy to detect in paintings, which is useful for dating pictures. Lead white

“Ochre and red oxides are some of the oldest pigments used by human kind. Evidence of ochre has been found in ancient burial sites such as Lake Mungo in Australia, where bones dated to around 65,000 years ago were found to be painted in ochre earth pigments.”

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LAPIS LAZULI PREMIUM
COBALT BLUE
PHTHALO BLUE
PRUSSIAN BLUE

> "With the right information, it is possible to create your own colours from scratch by adding pigments to oil and suspension media. It's a great way to save money on paints, especially if you are painting larger works."

will darken if mixed with sulphur, so should not be used in conjunction with the cadmium pigments or with French ultramarine. Lead white is the fastest drying of all the whites.

In Europe, the nineteenth century advances in the science of chemistry and some hitherto undiscovered pigments facilitated the creation of some wonderful new and permanent colours. The opening up of the world through maritime exploration with Asia and the Americas meant the availability of minerals such as Cobalt , Zinc, Chrome and Metallic Cadmium. As we have seen, many eastern countries had developed their own pallet of pigments, and some were very advanced.

A German chemist, Margraaf, is thought to have discovered zinc white in 1746. Until this time, the only white pigments available had been based on white lead, which was particularly toxic. The original supplies for zinc white came from China and South East Asia, but in the late eighteenth century, large deposits were found in Europe and more local large-scale production began. Titanium dioxide was discovered in 1821 but it was not until 1916 that it became commercially available. Titanium white is unique in that it is neither 'warm' nor 'cool' and is very useful for an artist's pallet.

Lamp black, also known as Carbon black or Vegetable black, was produced originally by burning vegetable oils. One of the most ancient pigments, it was the black pigment used in Egyptian wall murals, and decorations. Vine black was also a very old form of black pigment, produced by burning vine stems; this pigment has a bluish black colour. It is a very slow drying oil pigment and used under another pigment layer, will create drying cracks. Ivory black or Bone black was invented by the Romans. For higher grades of pigment, ivory was burned to create a higher carbon content.For lower grades, animal bones were used. It is this black that was used for the backgrounds for Rembrandt‘s paintings. A twentieth century pigment is Mars Black. It is the only black pigment which is considered non-toxic. Mars Black dries readily and forms a flexible surface. It is opaque with a warm brown undertone.

There are hundreds of pigments commercially available to artists at specialist art supply shops. With the right information, it is possible to create your own colours from scratch by adding pigments to oil and suspension media. It's a great way to save money on paints, especially if you are painting larger works. Follow the instructions given by the art supply shop carefully, and use good health and safety practices, including a mask and gloves. ■

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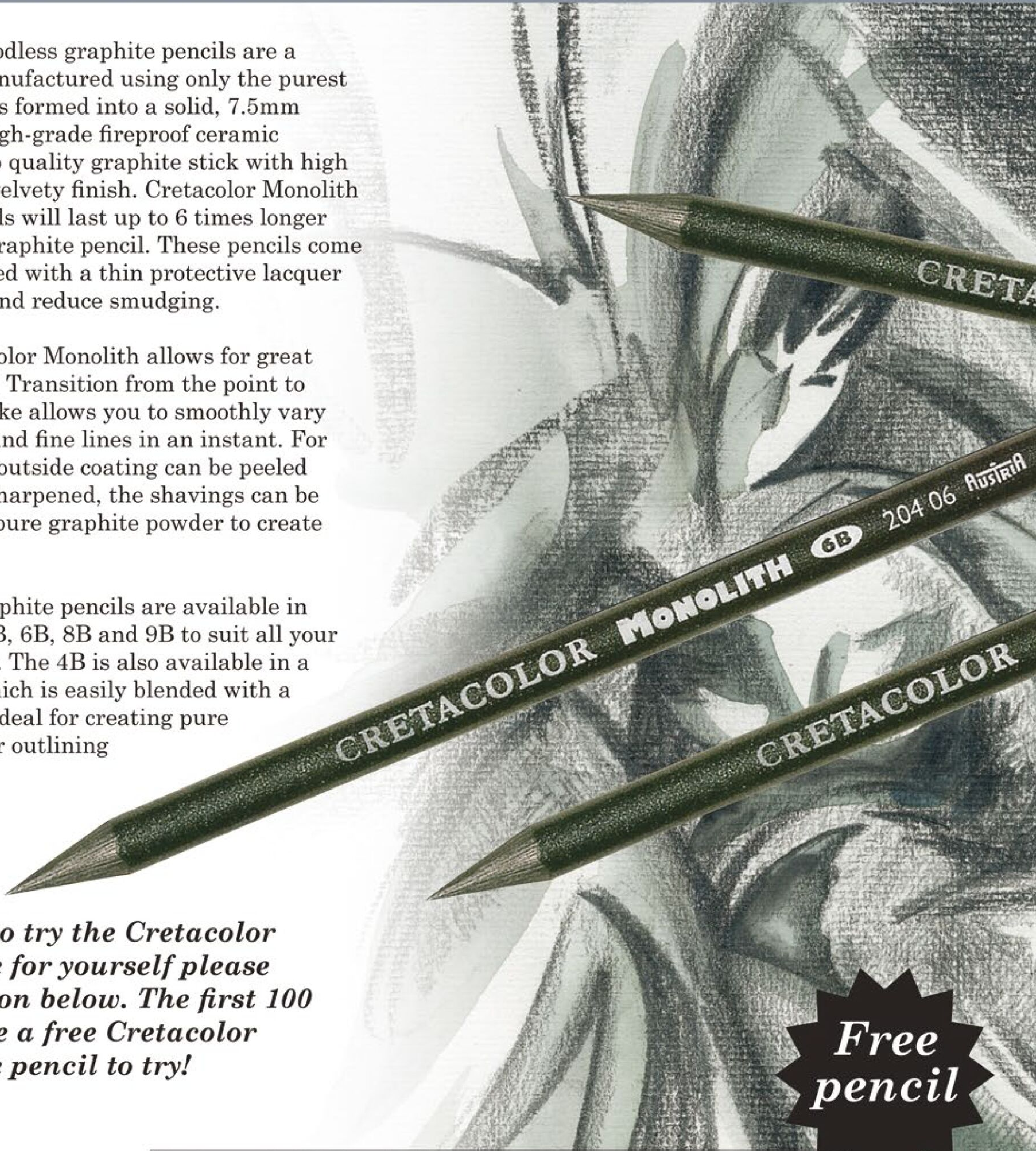

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Magic Pencil Tricks

By Brett A. Jones

When it comes to freehand drawing, the pencil in your hand is so much more than simply the means of making marks on the paper. It's also an absolutely indispensible tool that allows you to make any number of proportional judgements in the course of turning your blank sheet of paper into a finished work in graphite. In fact it's the only tool you need with the added elegant serendipity of already being in your hand every time you need it. This article will be dealing with some of the many tricks and techniques a pencil is capable of as far as making positional and proportional judgements while drawing and exactly how to utilize them to make drawing freehand accurately a reality for anyone (fig 1).

Any and every subject and composition is filled with different kinds of optical illusions which conspire, sometimes in combination, to stop you (and me) from accurately representing the subject as an accurate freehand line drawing which is always the first step before any kind of toning, different textures or fine detail can be tackled. Let alone the subtle light effects and reflections or the minute but all important spatial and linear idiosyncrasies which are present in any subject or composition you may choose to draw and which make all the difference between merely competently representing the subject and creating a fine art work in graphite which will grab someones attention and hold it (indefinitely if they put their hand in their pocket and buy it). Keep in mind that none of the following methods of judging lines, curves and proportions are worth a thing unless you learn to sketch and draw with a light hand so the lines you no longer need can be removed completely without any damage to the paper surface usually many times during the course of a drawing. This gets back to always keeping your eraser scrupulously clean by regularly trimming it with

Fig 1: The finished freehand drawing

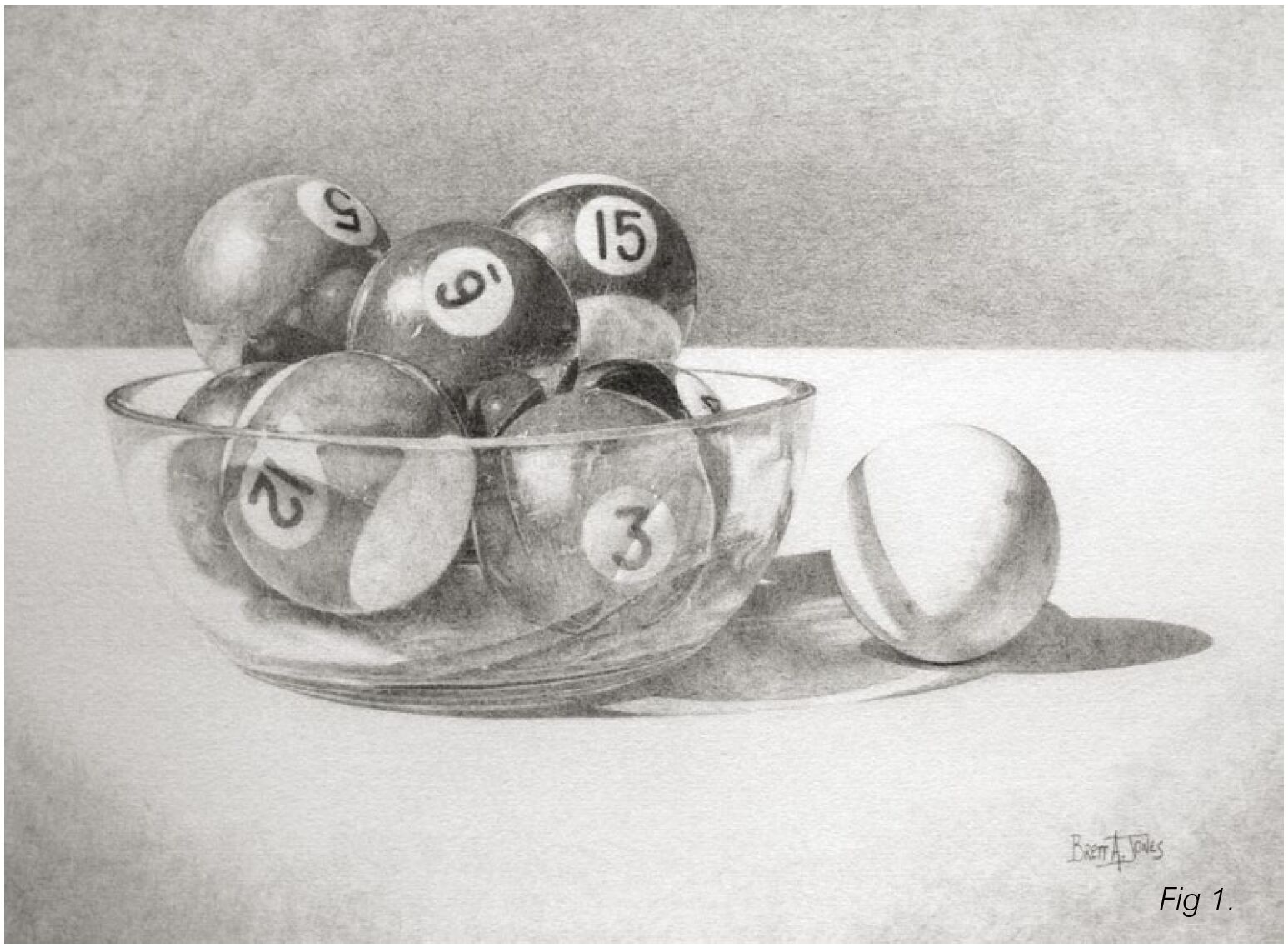
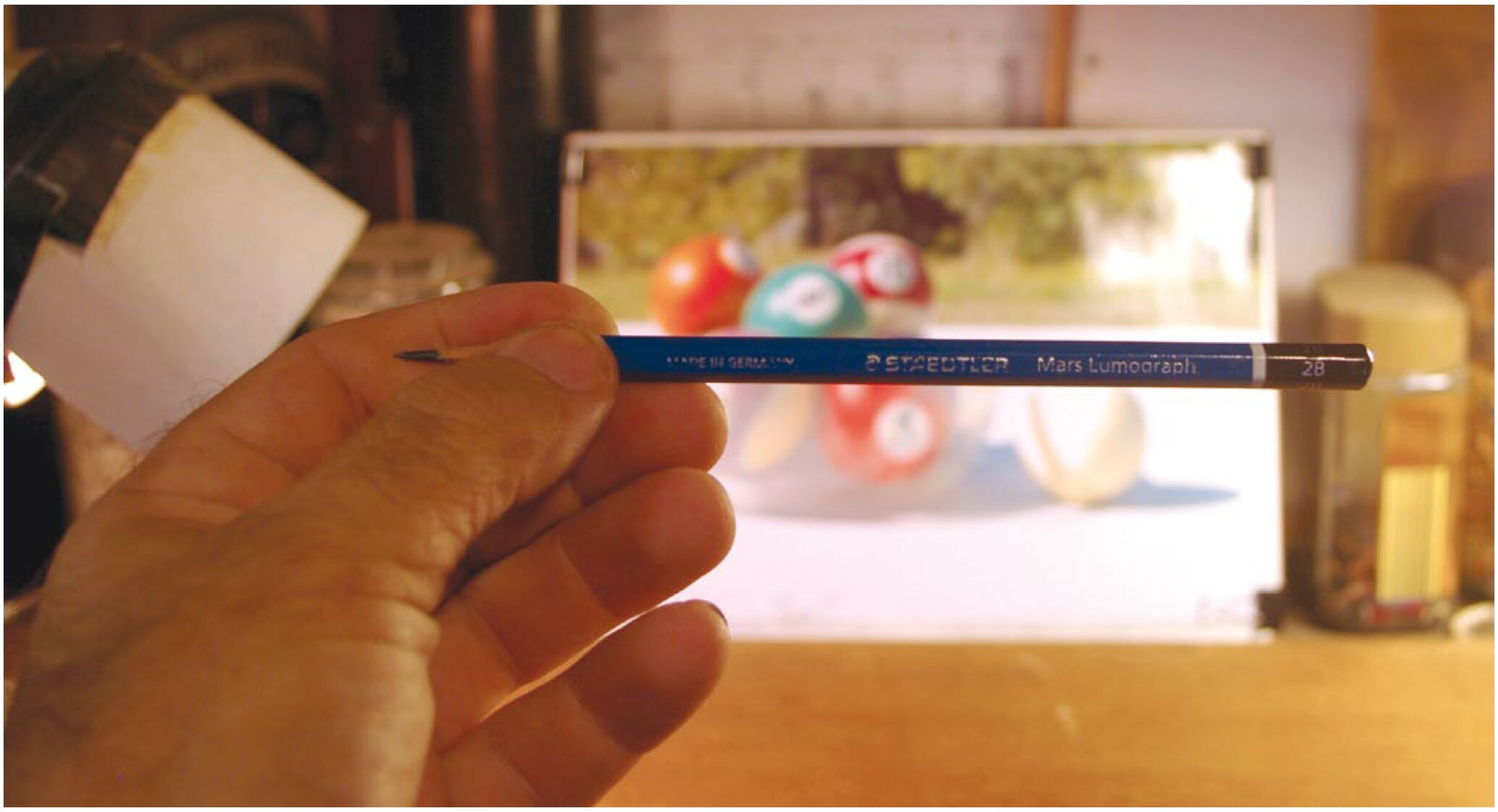


Fig 1.



your rubber knife and avoiding the temptation to lean on the pencil to make one line stand out among many (common mistake) instead of taking the time to carefully remove unwanted lines when necessary and just leave the (light) ones you want.

It's also well worth mentioning that although sometimes the adjustments you make to your existing sketch will be big, some of the most important refinements made in the overall scheme of things can come down to being as fine as moving a line or small part of a line one way or the other no more than the thickness of the line itself. Often you have to "ghost" a line (rub it out almost completely but still be able to just see it) so you can carefully replace it with the subtle changes to its shape or direction without the original line being in the way. You will be surprised how often (sometimes earlier in a drawing than you'd think) a very fine adjustment of a particular line or lines either in their actual position, angle, or shape will allow you to move forward on a drawing in danger of stalling. Sometimes the smallest of refinements will let you see why other larger adjustments are required on a different part of the drawing altogether. Two good golden rules to remember are 'No part of your drawing is above suspicion' and 'there's no such thing as too small an adjustment to worry about'.

No matter what your experience level there is a constant when it comes to drawing freehand, i.e. The point in every layout where you know it's not right but can't seem to spot the specific problem. At this point you can just keep on drawing and set the fundamental proportional errors in concrete and regret it later (and you will) or learn how to ask and answer your own questions with the pencil in your hand and make the necessary adjustments to your drawing as you proceed through every stage from start to finish.

There are lots of ways to "find out stuff" (proportional and positional facts) about your composition whether it's a reference photo you're working from or an "en plein air" (real life) situation without resorting to cheating (gridding, measuring, tracing). Before we go any further I have to make it clear that you never lay your pencil directly on the photo or your drawing paper. You aren't using your pencil to measure anything or transfer sizes of things on the photo onto your drawing but rather comparing specific aspects (or sometimes two or more things) on

> Any and every subject and composition is filled with different kinds of optical illusions which conspire, sometimes in combination, to stop you (and me) from accurately representing the subject…

Fig 2: Checking for levels

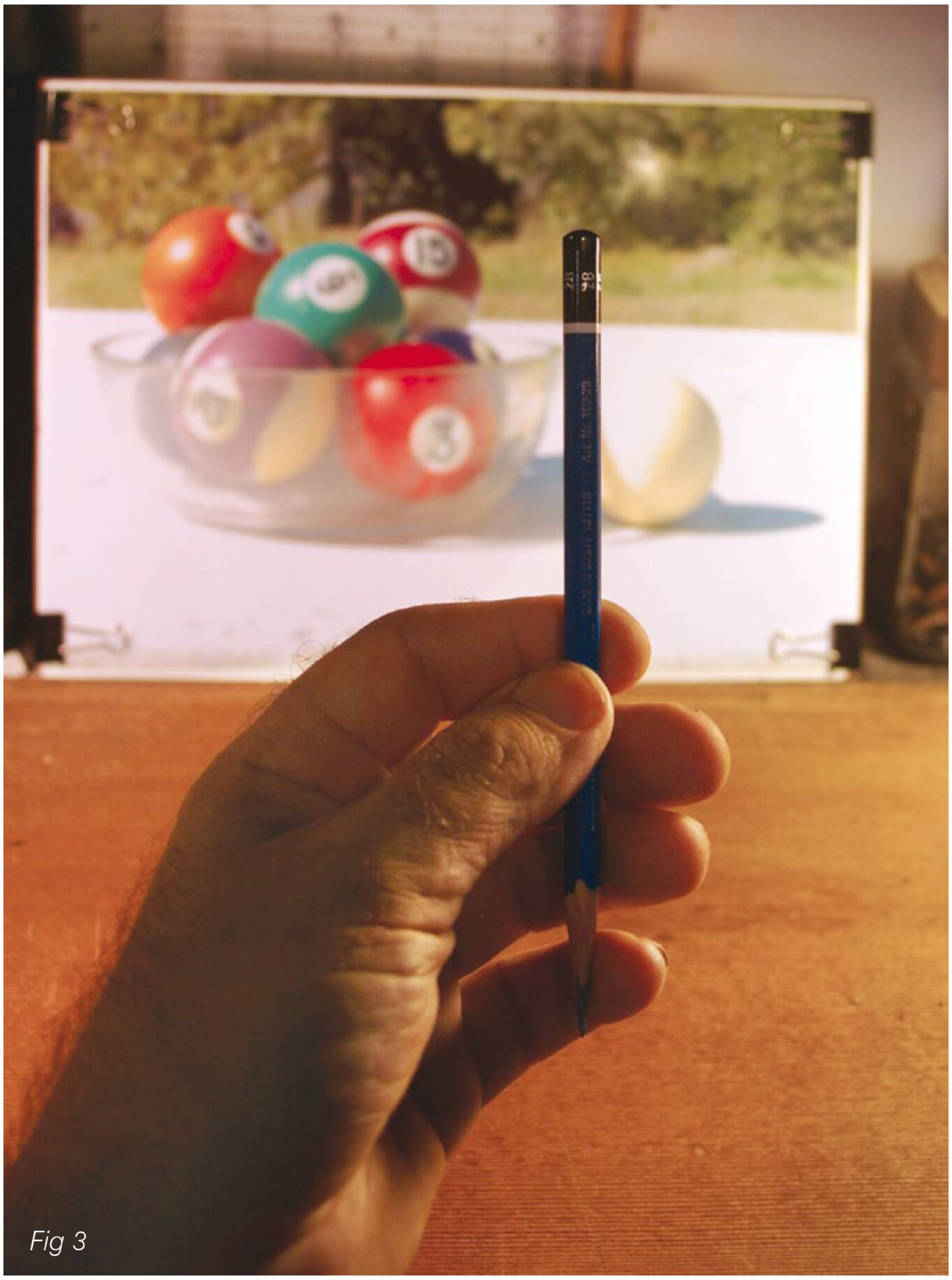


Fig 3

Fig 3. Creating a recognizable negative space, in this case between edge of glass bowl and pencil

the reference photo or real life scene and then relating this new found information (irrefutable facts) to your drawing paper. Your drawing will always be on a different scale to the photo you are working from either subtly or radically so none of the proportions or distances will ever directly relate. Rather you are learning actual useable information about the composition that is factual. These concrete facts are the answers to the questions you ask with the pencil in your hand. The knowledge you gain about whichever particular aspect of the composition you are working on is what you use to improve and refine your actual drawing by comparing your sketch with what you've learnt. It sounds complicated but is not once you get the hang of the concept.

A Few Examples (there are many, many subtle, useful and useable variations)

Level.

Hold your pencil on one end and making sure it is dead level (horizontal) hold it up halfway between your eye and the photo (or at arms length "en pleine aire") to see if lines in the composition are really as level or straight as they appear and then compare this to what you have drawn. Most lines are not dead level or even dead straight but using this method will allow you to see linear subtleties for what they really are (fig 2)

Plumb

Same as above only vertical instead of horizontal. If the line you are checking is not dead plumb (or level for that matter) then you create a recognizable negative space that can be compared to your drawing.

Angles

Hold the pencil up on the same angle as the angled line in question in the photo (or scene) and then without moving your wrist or hand position stand up over your sketch and compare. I draw flat on a table; if you draw on an easel obviously you don't have to stand up over your drawing board each time you make a comparison.

Create Negative Space Shapes.

Hold your pencil up either level or plumb (horizontal or vertical) and line up with the edge or corner of one of the shape/shapes in the composition. This will create a negative space shape with definitely recognizable shape (fig 3), proportional values and at least one straight edge (the one created by the pencil). Compare this to the same negative space shape on your drawing. To clarify;

negative spaces are the bits between and around the actual objects in the composition. The objects themselves are the positive spaces. You don't even need to involve your pencil for this one, if you can see a recognizable negative space in the composition, feel free to directly compare it to your drawing. Looking at negative spaces are a great way to spot errors on your layout, they are just as important as the positive spaces as if they are wrong the objects (positive spaces) in the composition MUST be the wrong shape/proportion or be in the wrong position. Using your pencil to break them up into smaller bits (either vertically or horizontally) is a great magic pencil trick to let you see things in a different way. You can also create positive space shapes the same way.

Extrapolating Lines.

Hold your pencil up against any recognizable line on the photo no matter what angle or length and without moving the pencil let your eye travel along its (the pencils) length and see what other parts of the composition intersect, meet or come close to an imaginary continuation of this line. Also a very good way of finding out if the shorter lines in your drawing are on the right angle which is every bit as important as the longer lines being right.

Comparing Two Features.

Pick out any two bits of your composition and hold your pencil up so it passes through the middle or along the edge of both. Check what other parts of the composition are on this line or near it. Also check that the angle of the imaginary line is correct. You drawing must be the same and if not is wrong and needs altering to suit.

Judging Sizes

(maybe the most useful trick of all)

Hold your thumbnail against your pencil to mark one side of an object or feature in the composition and the end of the pencil to mark the other and while being careful to keep your pencil both parallel and the same distance from the photo/scene (your knuckles are against an imaginary sheet of glass) step out with the section of pencil between your thumbnail and the end, how many widths of that particular object or feature fit across the whole composition (or from top to bottom). This is just one example of this incredibly useful trick which has many applications and subtleties once you master the basic premise (fig 4).

All these methods have got certain things in common. The photo or real life scene is always right, you can't change it. You are looking for inconsistencies in your drawing. It's not at all a bad thing when you find them but a very good thing as it gives you information which can be positively used to refine and develop your line drawing (the whole idea). There are always at least two things you could change when you find an inconsistency and one will always be a lot more helpful as far as developing your drawing than the other so study each problem in that light.

Unless you have to ghost a line on a very fine adjustment you should always lay down your new adjustment lines before you erase the old ones. Always take the time to judge whether the new line/s are actually an improvement or not before removing the old one/s. This has two benefits; firstly it allows you the freedom to lay down speculative lines without having to commit to them. You can always rub it/them out if you don't like the result, as they say there's no such thing as a failed experiment. Secondly it lets you use the old line/s as evidence of where and by how much the adjustment should be made. If you rub out first there's a more than even chance you'll put the new line back in the same place anyway. The more you use these methods the more variations and subtleties will occur to you. Personally, without these techniques there's no way I would be able to draw anything freehand except badly proportioned garbage.

> "There are lots of ways to "find out stuff" (proportional and positional facts) about your composition whether it's a reference photo you're working from or an "en plein air" (real life) situation without resorting to cheating (gridding, measuring, tracing)"

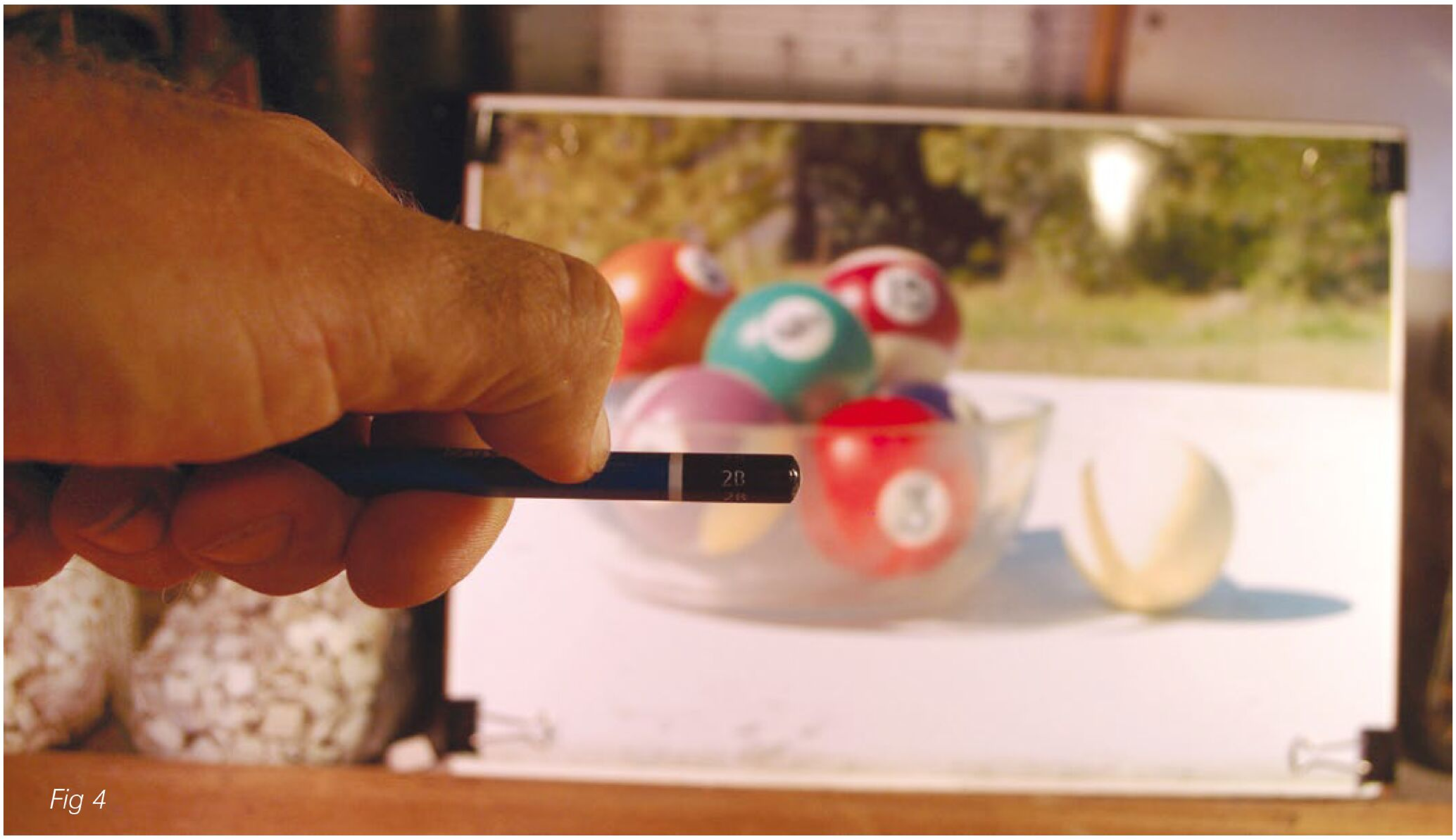


Fig 4. Checking for correct proportions, in this case how many times the purple ball fits across the composition

Important Things to Remember

- Always keep all the lines you lay down light enough to remove without damaging the paper surface.
- Keep your rubber scrupulously clean by trimming with a clean, sharp knife used only for this purpose.
- The more refined your line drawing becomes; the sharper you should have your pencil. You have to be able to draw lines with a needle sharp pencil that are still completely removable with an eraser, the sharper the pencil the lighter the pressure you can use before irreversibly marking the paper.
- Finding mistakes in your drawing is not only inevitable but good; the process of freehand drawing consists almost entirely of looking for things that bother you and improving them. When your drawing stops bugging you it's time to sign your name in the corner.
- Learn to enjoy the anxiety drawing accurately creates, even if you don't realize it at first it's an addictive stress and one of the reasons you are drawn to doing it in the first place.
- Don't lay your pencil on the photo or your drawing, it's not a ruler or a tape measure, you can't lay a pencil across a real life scene so the same apples to reference photos.
- Don't fall into the trap of trying to 'mark out' an initial sketch using these tricks, they will serve you far better as methods to improve your existing sketch/drawing.
- Don't draw centrelines on (quarter) the photo and paper you are drawing on, that's still a grid just a big, fat one. If you can't draw freehand without cheating you're not drawing freehand at all. You might as well just give up and be done with it and buy a projector, a ruler and a calculator or a big roll of tracing paper.

The rewards of freehand fine art drawing are there for those who seek them,

Brett A. Jones

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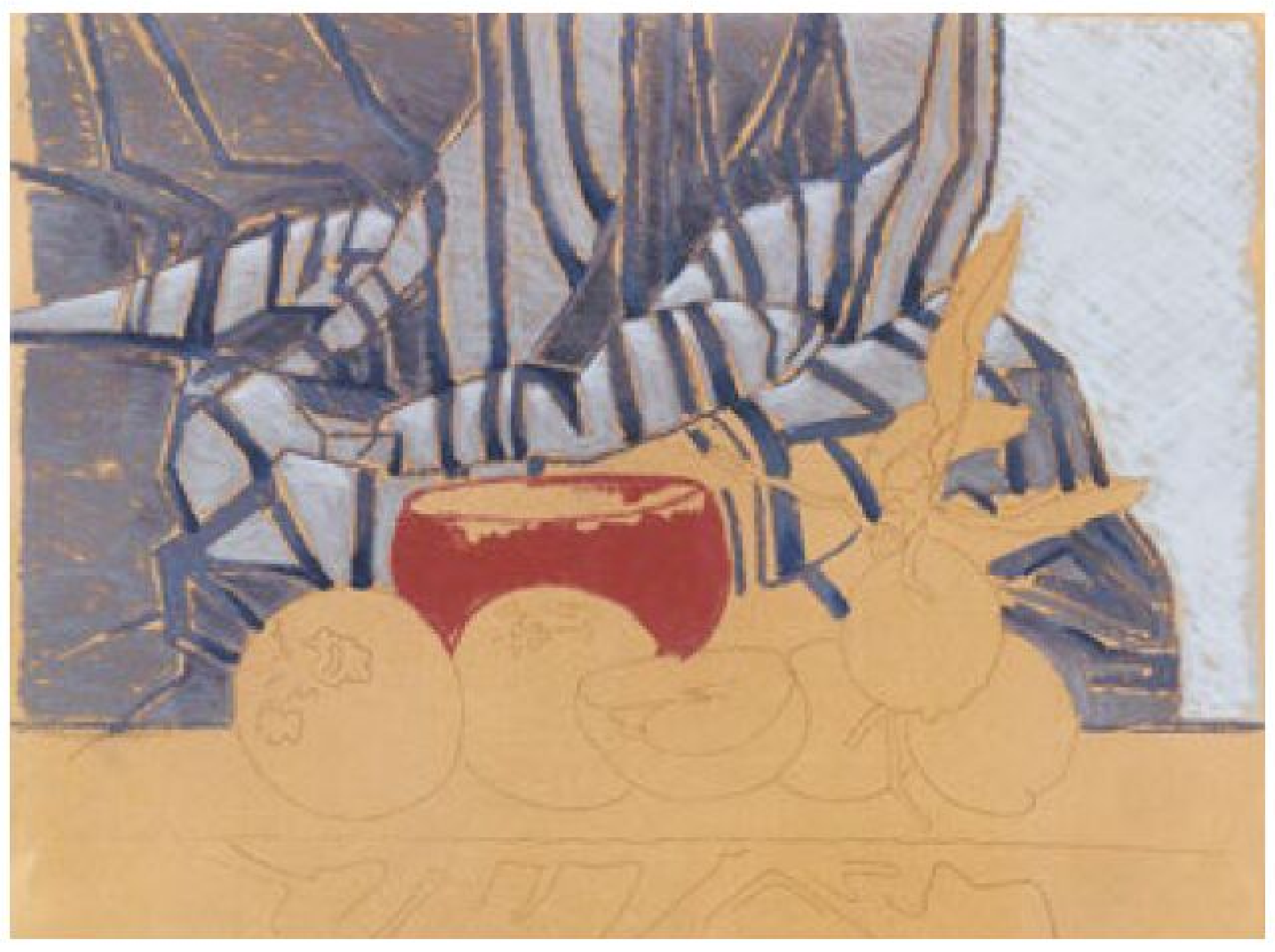
Artists' Canvas and other Substrates

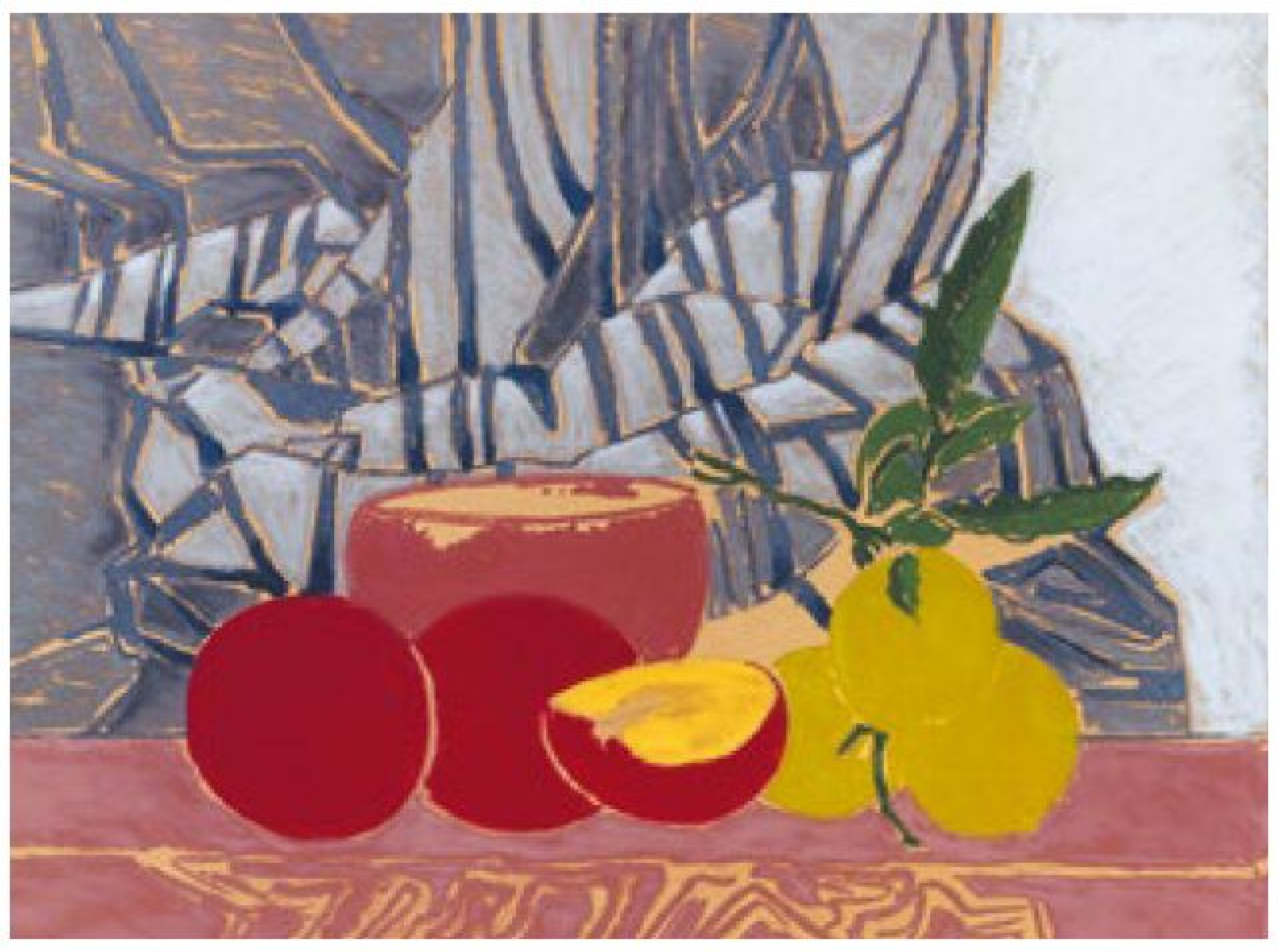
Contributed

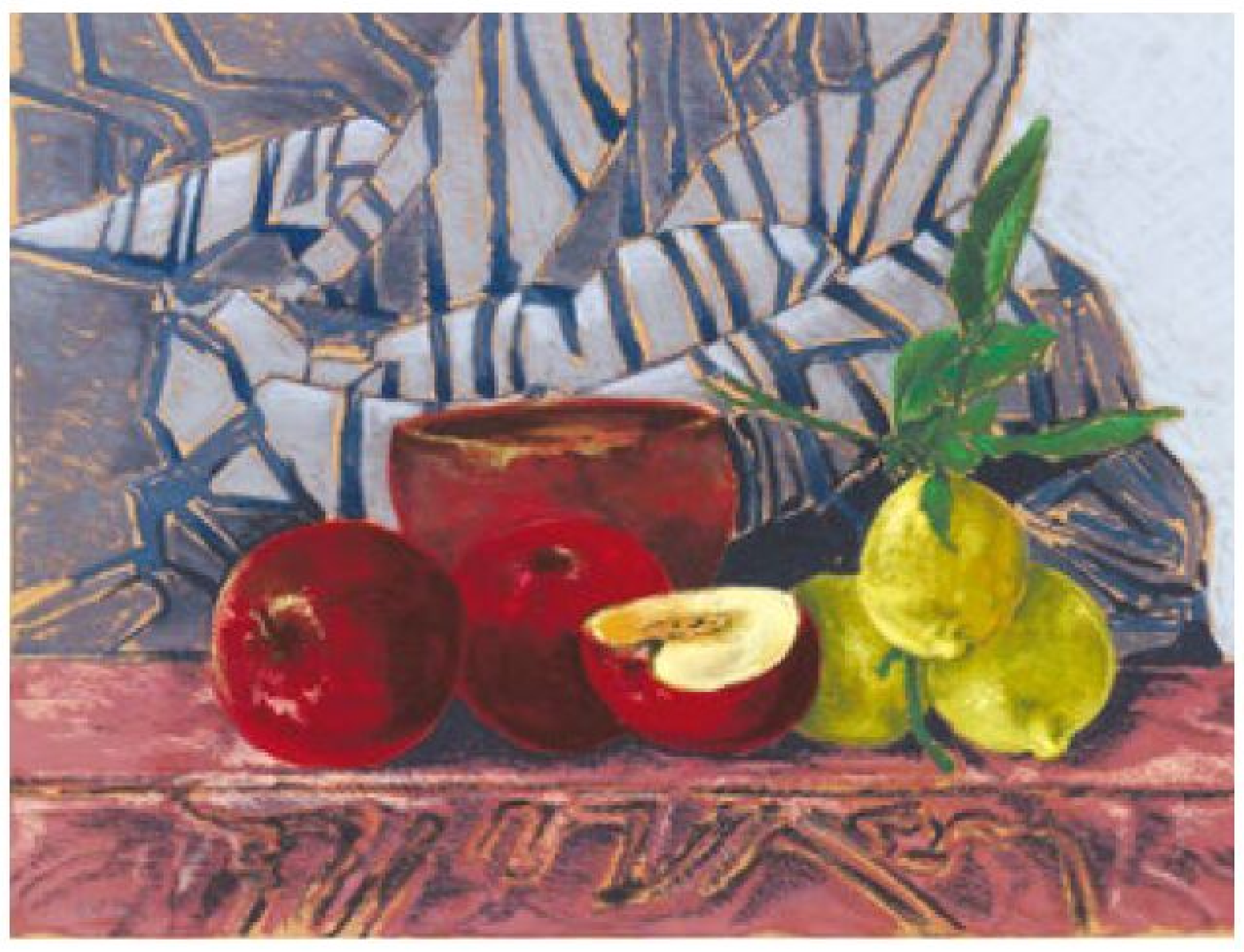
Before creating a painting, an artist must first decide what surface to paint it on. Well known traditional substrates include canvas and various types of paper … but there are numerous other options available too. Some of your favourite art materials suppliers are delighted to highlight a selection of the many products being offered.

ART BASICS PROMOTES DELUXE PASTEL PAPERS FROM SCHMINCKE

A unique and beautiful pastel support available is the premium quality Schmincke Sansfix pastel paper. Prepared on 360gsm acid free paper, the superfine coating of grit on the surface allows layers and layers of pastel to be put down – whilst retaining the ability for fine detail from the first stroke.







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'Still Life with Fruits' is a demonstration work done on Schmincke sand-coloured Sansfix paper with Schmincke Pastels.

After the sketch has been drawn with a brown pencil, the background is created with Grey Blue (Number 091 in the mixtures B, D, H, M, O). This is complemented with Bluish Violet (057 O). The bowl is filled in with Caput Mortuum Pale (023 H).

This is then followed by the surface area of the fruits. Madder Lake is used for the apples and Permanent Yellow 2 Light (003 B) for the lemons. The leaves and stalks are painted with olive green (086 B and D); and the area of depth (table cloth) with Caput Mortuum Deep (024 M).

In the finer work in the middle ground and foreground, shades of Mossy Green 2 (076 B, D, H, M, O) are applied to the leaves and stalks of the lemons. The lemons' final colouring is achieved with Olive Green 1 (085 D) and Permanent Yellow 1 Lemon (002 B, D, O).

The cut surface of the apple is painted with Permanent Yellow 1 Lemon (002 B and O); and linear contrasts are achieved with Burnt Umber (035 B). The bowl is then coloured with Burnt Green Earth (033 D), Burnt Umber (035 B) and Bohemian Green (083 M) and, as a final touch, lightly hatched with Prussian Blue (066 H).

Permanent Red 3 Deep (044 D) and Carmine Red (046 D) give the apples a subtle glow. Their darker areas are achieved with Grey Violet (090 B) and Vandyke Brown (036 B). This is then followed by light additions of Chromium Oxide Green (084 H).

Finally, the lighter shades and highlights are set with Permanent Red 1 Pale (042 D) and Permanent Yellow 1 Lemon (002 O). Vandyke Brown (036) and Grey Violet (090) are used to further accentuate the above by adding shadows. The same dark qualities are used for the table cloth which is heightened with Permanent Red 1 Pale (042 O).

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From experience comes sound knowledge and Roymac has put this knowledge to use with a professional range of canvas rolls and watercolour paper. Made from the highest quality materials, Roymac's range of surfaces offers trustworthy solutions to all your painting and drawing needs.

Roymac Blank Space Canvas Rolls are high quality and of professional standard, offering the perfect base on which to build your creations. Ideal for studio or classroom use, the canvas is 100 per cent pure cotton and is closely woven to ensure a taut and firm surface when stretched. The canvas can be cut down to any desired size, so there is no limitation to the scale or scope of your artwork. The canvas comes in primed or unprimed varieties to suit your artistic needs and is available in 10 metre or 50 metre rolls and 8 ounce or 10 ounce weights. In addition, rolls of canvas can be found at art shops where you can choose the size to suit your needs. The canvas is 72 inches wide, making it big enough to ensure you're never without a creative solution.

Roymac's range has also developed quality watercolour paper. If you're one for watercolour, Roymac Rains Watercolour Paper is a premium choice for artists. At 300gsm and measuring 230 x 305 mm over 12 sheets in a pad and 460 x 615 mm as individual sheets, this paper is a high quality and handy addition to any art room. The paper is also acid free, which prevents it from yellowing with age; and made in France with the advantage of 100 per cent cotton fibre. It is a cold pressed and felt-marked surface that is suitable for all watercolour techniques. Cold pressed watercolour paper has a slightly textured surface, which puts its watercolour effect in between a grainy and a smooth appearance.

The Roymac Rains Watercolour Paper is an ideal complement to Roymac Rains Watercolour Paint, but it can also be used with other materials such as pastels and charcoal – making it the perfect solution to a variety of artistic practices. A likely favourite among watercolour artists, Roymac Rains Watercolour Paper is internally and surface sized for wet media.

When your imagination leads you to a creation, it is undoubtedly vital that the surface upon which your masterpiece takes place is of a high standard. Roymac has successfully complemented its existing range with surfaces that you can rely on; and that you will love to create on. Roymac is created by Australian artists for Australian artists.

The ultimate watercolour paper and an ideal complement to Roymac Rains Watercolour Paint, Roymac Rains Watercolour Paper is a must-have for watercolourists. Roymac knows that a budding imagination needs a creative outlet and a quality surface … so Roymac Rains Watercolour Paper has been developed for this exact purpose.

Roymac is giving away 20 Rains Watercolour Pads to the first 20 people to contact Micador Group after reading this article. Please call Julia on 9590 0122; or email roymac@micador.com.au

Call Micador Group on 1800 628 878 for more information on this and other quality artists' requirements … or email: questions@micador.com.au

ROYMAC
RAINS™
WATERCOLOUR PAPER – FOR ARTISTS
ROYMAC
FOR ARTISTS
BLANK SPACE®
10 OUNCE CANVAS ROLL
100% pure cotton, closely woven unprimed canvas - for artists

> "When your imagination leads you to a creation, it is undoubtedly vital that the surface upon which your masterpiece takes place is of a high standard."

ABUNDANT QUALITY SUBSTRATE OPTIONS FROM S&S WHOLESALE

Oil Primed Linen was one of the first surfaces developed for 'modern' painting. For hundreds of years, oil painters have recognised that traditionally prepared, oil primed, Belgian linen is the ultimate support for their artwork. With the advent of acrylic and watercolour paints along with the development of faster production methods for less expensive cotton fabric canvas, the use and popularity of traditional oil primed linen steadily declined over the past 50 years. Now, with the introduction of cheap, poorly constructed, non-archival canvases, many oil painters are turning back to the original (and best) painting surface for oil painting.

The Phoenicians introduced flax to Europe and the quality varies according to soil and weather conditions. Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Russia produce linen of varying qualities. However, Belgium is the leader in growing and producing the finest quality flax and artist grade linen. The goal of harvesting and processing flax is to obtain flax seeds and fibres. The fibres are attached to the hollow woody core of each plant. Flax fibres are 36 inches in length (compared to one inch cotton fibres) giving superior strength. They are round and uniform, rather than flat ribbon-like cotton fibres, which gives linen a bold texture that can be seen and felt through layers of paint.

Linen is traditionally the preferred fabric of painters. It offers the artist the most permanency, strength and beauty of any canvas material. It is the most durable fabric to paint on. Its warp and weft threads are equal in weight and strength, making it less susceptible to expansion and contraction due to moisture. The irregular character of the weave can be seen through layers of paint, imparting a sense of depth to the finished painting. It retains its natural oils over time, preserving fabric flexibility.

Oil paint is a combination of pigment and linseed oil, which is derived from flax. Linen canvas is also made from flax, thus making oil paint and linen highly compatible. The pure Belgian linen is prepared from start to finish entirely by hand, using century-old techniques. Each canvas is first stretched on large specially designed frames and thoroughly picked over by hand to remove irregularities. Then every square inch of the canvas is smoothed using volcanic pumice stone. The next step is the application of warm animal hide glue, carefully spread using long stainless steel spatulas to seal the linen. As the glue cools, the linen tightens. It is pumiced smooth again. Next, a fine preparation of old-world lead white is applied. Made from a carefully prepared mixture of lead whiting and linseed oil, this oil priming applied over the carefully prepared linen yields a surface prized by oil painters everywhere.

Artists who have painted on well made oil primed linen have experienced the highly receptive quality of its surface. The tactile, sensual feeling of painting on oil primed linen is unique. No other surface accepts paint quite like it. The oil paint and ground seem to 'know' each other like long-lost brothers, and the finished painting exudes a rich, luxurious quality prized by knowledgeable buyers and collectors.

> "Linen is traditionally the preferred fabric of painters. It offers the artist the most permanency, strength and beauty of any canvas material. It is the most durable fabric to paint on."

FABRIANO
Tiziano
Carta patinata mar
Textured coated paper
SCHIZZI
sketching
Accademia
MATITA · CARBONCINO
GRAPHITE PENCIL · CHARCOAL
FABRIANO
FABRIANO
imaginart
DIGITAL PAPER FOR PHOTO & ART

PasteLLo
PasteL
Ingres
BIANCO
FABRIANO
acquarello
watercolour
Artístico
TRADITIONAL WHITE
100% COTTON
GRANA FINA
COLD PRESSED
300g/m² - 140 lbs
FABRIANO

For years, watercolourists have been restricted to painting on watercolour paper. While many great watercolour artworks have been produced on paper, artists had to work within the limitations of watercolour paper. Watercolour papers have a tendency to buckle when wet and require special care such as stapling or taping to a firm surface. They also can tear quite easily when wet and artists must be very careful when practising traditional watercolour techniques. Previously, galleries have been reluctant to acquire and sell watercolour works because they were done on paper and not of archival quality.

Watercolour canvas is made of 100 per cent cotton artist canvas covered with a specially formulated acid free coating that performs similar to a cold press or rough watercolour paper while providing a distinctive look that can only be achieved on canvas. In addition, artists can use all the techniques that are used with watercolour paper. Repairs and adjustments can be performed easily; and when using pre-stretched canvas and boards, there is no buckling – even with the wettest of applications. In the past, watercolourists have been restricted in the size of their painting due to paper size. The fact that watercolour canvas is available in rolls removes the restriction on the size of watercolour paintings. Artists will also find that gallery acceptance of watercolours may increase as they can now be shown or hung in the same way as acrylic or oil paintings; and the paintings will stand the test of time because they are painted on an archival surface.

Cotton is the most popular artist grade canvas fabric. Cotton fibres stretch more than linen, allowing for a tighter mounted canvas with less straining. Cotton canvas panels offer the artist an inexpensive, versatile and portable canvas to paint on. They are constructed from finely woven cotton canvas mounted onto heavy cardboard backing, usually with acid free glue. The glue provides a barrier between the board and canvas, helping to maintain longevity. The surface of the canvas panel usually has a very definite paint-gripping 'tooth' with minimum absorption, providing a perfect painting support for oils, acrylics, gouache and tempera colours. All sides of the canvas panel are glued and turned in, to prevent fraying and separation.

When it comes to paper, S&S Wholesale stocks a range of professional quality digital papers from renowned Italian paper manufacturer Fabriano. This range of paper, called ImaginArt, has been designed with a specific surface treatment for top quality inkjet printing. The paper is archival quality (acid free, neutral Ph) and free of optical brighteners. The range is ideal for the reproduction of artworks (watercolour, oil, acrylic and pastel) and photographs. ImaginArt is available in a wide range of styles, weights and coatings ensuring that you can find exactly the digital or photographic paper you need.

Sketching and drawing papers are made for 'all purpose' use. They are generally very similar in surface texture with a fine/medium tooth to accept all dry media. Drawing paper is usually heavier in weight, usually between 120gsm and 240gsm, and is more suitable for developed work and finished pieces. Sketching paper is generally lighter in weight (from 65gsm to 120gsm) with a smoother surface; and is best used for preliminary drawings, sketches and practice work. The most popular

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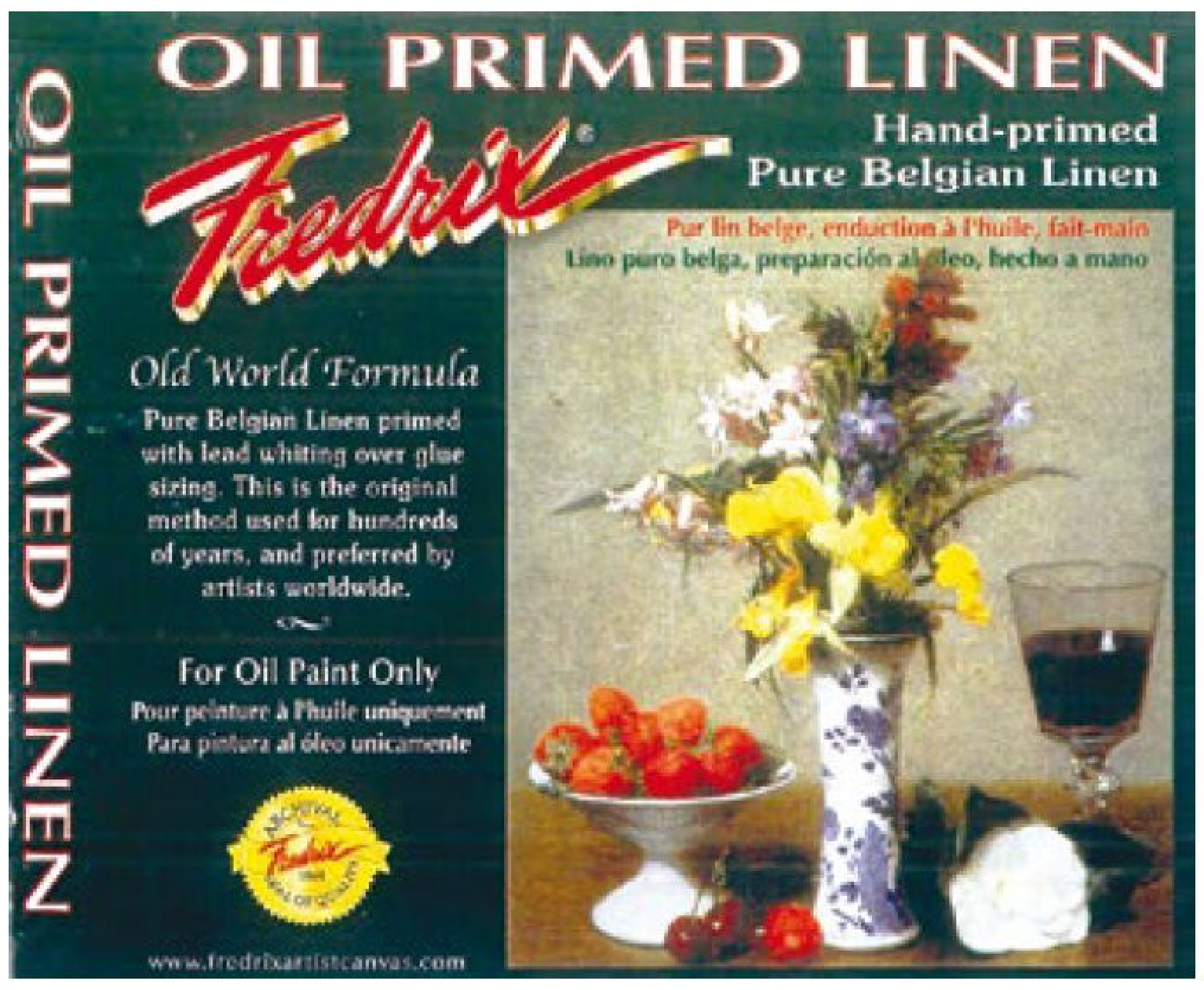

OIL PRIMED LINEN
Fredrix®
Hand-primed
Pure Belgian Linen
Pur lin belge, enduction à l'huile, fait-main
Lino puro belga, preparación al óleo, hecho a mano
OIL PRIMED LINEN
Old World Formula
Pure Belgian Linen primed with lead whiting over glue sizing. This is the original method used for hundreds of years, and preferred by artists worldwide.
For Oil Paint Only
Pour peinture à l'huile uniquement
Para pintura al óleo unicamente
www.fredrixartistcanvas.com

surface for drawing and sketching is cartridge paper. Cartridge paper obtained its name from being used to wrap gunpowder for cartridges in the 1800s. Although this use has long passed, the term cartridge paper has become the standard for any general drawing and sketching paper. Quality drawing and sketching paper is acid free with a neutral pH; and generally free of optical brightening agents. It is usually made of high quality, lignin free cellulose – which guarantees long conservation over time; and is internally and externally sized, rendering it resistant to repeated erasures. These papers are generally produced using a Fourdrinier papermaking machine. The top-of-the-range drawing papers are made with 100 per cent cotton rag and are mould made (these papers are often watermarked).

Pastellists want their surface to interact with their pastels. The key to successful pastel paper is the surface texture. A pastel paper without texture is like trying to stick a postage stamp to a piece of glass … it won't stick. Pastels are so soft that they need something to grip to – a 'positive tooth' to hold the pastel grains. The more pronounced surface or tooth the paper has, the more the pastel will adhere to the paper. There are two types of pastel paper available for pastel work: Sanded and unsanded. Sanded pastel paper is similar to very fine sandpaper. Manufacturers generally use either vegetable grain or very fine grain sand to achieve the tooth. The Premium Pastel Surfaces manufactured by Jack Richeson & Co have a sanded primer screen printed onto the surface to ensure complete and even coverage.

Unsanded pastel papers use the grain or fibres of the paper for the pastel to stick to. For example, Fabriano Ingres paper has a grain of closely spaced fine lines on one side and a slightly mottled surface on the other. Sometimes it is referred to as a vellum texture. Unsanded pastel papers work well if you are a pastel painter with a light touch. The advantage of unsanded pastel papers is that they will not use as much pastel in order to achieve full colour coverage. It is also easier to control lighter strokes, which can create a smoother look in the end.

The other factor to consider with pastel paper is the colour of the paper. It can significantly affect the result of the finished picture. The mood and atmosphere of a pastel painting will be reflected by the tint of the paper for a couple of reasons. Unlike paints, pastels rarely cover the whole surface. Areas not covered by the pastel let the underlying paper colour show through. Having the correct colour paper will pull the picture together, providing a subtle but important unity to the finished piece. For example, a reddish-brown paper will give a deep warm glow to the picture and allow lighter colours like yellows to be more pronounced. A pale blue or grey paper will give a much more subdued effect.

Pastel papers are available in a wide range of tints and shades.

Watercolour paper is heavier, more robust paper – specifically designed to withstand the rigours of watercolour painting. Watercolour paper is divided into three catergories according to the surface of the paper: Rough, hot pressed (HP) and cold pressed (which is sometimes referred to as NOT, as in not hot pressed). Rough watercolour paper has the most textured surface or the best 'tooth'. On rough watercolour paper, paint from watery washes tends to collect in the indentations in the paper – creating a grainy effect when the paint dries. If only light brush strokes are made across the surface, paint is only applied to part of the paper – the tops and ridges – and not in the indentations.

Rough paper is an excellent paper for a loose, expressive style of painting but not for paintings requiring fine detail. Hot pressed watercolour paper has a smooth surface with almost no tooth. The smooth surface is excellent for painting fine detail and washes of colour; this type of paper is generally used by experienced watercolourists as the paint often slides around on the smooth surface. Cold pressed watercolour paper is the paper in between rough and hot pressed paper, with a slightly textured surface. Cold pressed is the most commonly used watercolour paper surface, as it allows for a good amount of detail while also having some texture to it.

Watercolour paper weights range from 200gsm up to 640gsm. Lighter paper needs to be stretched to prevent it from buckling or warping when it is painted on. Generally, watercolour paper 300gsm and above will not require stretching.

Fabriano Artistico is a typical 'quality' watercolour paper. It is mould-made, 100 per cent cotton, chlorine and acid free; and archival. Artistico has an internal and external sizing which makes it very absorbant and suitable for lifting, scraping and other techniques. It is free of optical brighteners, has four deckle edges and is watermarked 'Fabriano Artistico'. As with most watercolour papers it is available in cold press, hot press and rough finishes – and the weights range from 200gsm up to 640gsm.

Please contact S&S Wholesale Customer Service by telephone on 1300 731 529 for further information and stockists.

NEW!
Fredrix
100% Cotton Artist Canvas for all Water Based Paints
Acid Free
Watercolor Canvas
10 sheets 16" x 20"

EXCELLENT CANVAS AND PAPER OPTIONS FROM JASCO

Both can be painted straight from the tube and are characteristically thick, heavy bodied colour. However, as both types of colour can also be thinned, each medium has its own additional surfaces that can also be used.

Stretched, primed canvas is the traditional and most common support for oil colour – although there are a variety of additional supports and surfaces that are suitable for oils. Wood panels, MDF and other Masonite types are good for stability and offer proven longevity and surfaces that will not flex. Canvas boards are also great for outdoor work – offering the same unique, double-primed painting surface as stretched canvases; but they are less easily damaged when painting en plein air. Winton Oil Colour Pads are also popular for sketching or outdoor work.

Acrylics can be used on a large variety of supports including canvas, paper, wood, degreased leather, brickwork … or anything which is neither greasy nor too glossy. Professionals and those painters using an oil technique favour canvas whilst paper is used by those working in a watercolour style. Galeria Acrylic Pads are also popular for sketching or outdoor work.

The Winsor & Newton Artists' Quality Canvas range consists of carefully selected and prepared stretched cotton canvas to ensure outstanding quality. This range is now more comprehensive than ever before and is ideal for all techniques including heavier application of colour.

The Artists' Quality range also benefits from having a heavier weight superior cloth of medium grain surface that has been triple coated with two coats of highly pigmented primer and one coat of acid free sizing – all formulated by Winsor & Newton. Artists' Canvas also offers balanced absorbency and tooth, essential for preventing the sinking of oil colour; this also means that the canvas has improved adhesion. All Artists' Canvas is stapled on the reverse, resulting in clean edges (to ensure that you can paint on all four sides). Professional stretcher bars are provided as standard and they offer great strength and stability.

All Winsor & Newton canvases are also supplied with wedges. Wedges are used to expand the stretcher if the canvas slackens in adverse weather conditions. Wedges should be placed in the corners and tapped in with a

"The Winsor & Newton Artists' Quality Canvas range consists of carefully selected and prepared stretched cotton canvas to ensure outstanding quality."

Cotman
Water Colour Block
Gummed Water Colour Pad

> "The paper you select for watercolour and gouache will have a significant influence on your final painting. The paper's characteristic behaviour, determined by its manufacture; and the colour, weight and surface texture; will have a profound effect on the character of your work. "

pin hammer. The use of wedges is not a common requirement.

Winsor & Newton Galeria Acrylic Paper is popular with acrylic painters for its texture and drag. It is also an economical support which can be less inhibiting than a stretched canvas. As acrylics are not prone to sinking like oils, a wider variety of results can be more easily achieved on paper. Galeria Paper reflects high quality acrylic products at a uniform affordable price. It is a canvas textured paper developed specifically by Winsor & Newton for painting in acrylics. It is popular for those sketching both outdoors and in the studio; and for those artists who prefer using paper to canvas. Unlike other acrylic papers on the market, Galeria is made from the highest quality woodfree fibre – guaranteeing an acid free product. The paper is buffered and mould-made, and the weight is 140 pounds. Galeria is both internally and externally sized for colour brilliance and is supplied in a selection of pads and loose sheet paper. Galeria Paper can be used for oil painting provided it has been primed with one or two thin coats of acrylic gesso primer.

Different surfaces are available for watercolour and gouache. The paper you select for watercolour and gouache will have a significant influence on your final painting. The paper's characteristic behaviour, determined by its manufacture; and the colour, weight and surface texture; will have a profound effect on the character of your work. It is therefore essential to understand the nature of each paper you use and to choose carefully.

You can, of course, paint on any paper that suits your purposes … but there are papers made specifically for painting with watercolour and gouache. Both mediums use the same surfaces as they are both based upon Gum Arabic and are used in exactly the same way.

Generally there are two qualities of paper available: Both are mould-made for greater stability. The first is made from cotton (or '100 per cent rag') and the second from chemically processed wood fibre (known as 'woodfree' paper). For fine art work, watercolour papers are recommended if the artist wants to be able to exploit the widest variety of techniques and ensure long-term stability.

However, there are many different types of each of these papers … and there are other elements that need to be taken into consideration. Winsor & Newton Cotman Watercolour Paper is available in the most popular Hot/Cold Pressed surface, in 90 pound (190gsm), 140 pound (300gsm) and 200 pound (425gsm) weights; and is supplied in loose sheets and a selection of pads.

Oil colour and acrylic colour can be used on similar surfaces due to the nature and consistency of the paints. A firm favourite amongst watercolour artists, Cotman Watercolour Paper is a fine quality mould-made woodfree paper made exclusively to the exacting specifications of Winsor & Newton. Both inexpensive and versatile, it is ideal for use by students, amateurs or professionals who use large quantities of paper. Cotman paper is acid free for extensive life without deterioration and is both internally and externally sized to give brilliance of colour and to facilitate erasing and sponging without damaging the surface. It has a natural warm white surface.

Cotman Watercolour Paper is recommended by the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours and has been awarded their seal of approval. This award was made after extensive testing of the paper which was found to offer a 'unique combination of quality, value and reliability'. Cotman Watercolour Paper has therefore met the exacting standards demanded by the membership of one of Britain's leading groups of watercolourists.

Further information about quality artists' products can be obtained from JASCO – telephone 1800 676 155.

Pastel
Mi-Teintes
CANSON
Pastel
Mi-Teintes
CANSON
Pastel
Mi-Teintes
CANSON

DERWENT ‘SUEDE EFFECT’ ARTIST JOURNALS FROM OXFORD

Journals are ideal for taking on your travels to capture your first impressions and memories; or for those initial ‘mind jogging’ sketches.

Each Derwent Journal contains 80 sheets of high quality 200gsm acid free cartridge paper. And, to make sure you do not lose those all important mementos of your travels, the journals feature two pockets – one on the inside front cover, plus an expanding pocket in the back.

Bound in luxurious soft touch suede effect material, in a choice of Black or Beige, the Derwent Journals are available in two handy sizes: Mini (120 x 170 mm) $19.95; and Pocket (90 x 140 mm) $15.95. Both sizes and colours are available from Oxford Art Supplies and Books in Chatswood.

The Derwent Safari range of artists’ journals offers convenience today. Intrepid travellers of the 18th and 19th centuries recorded, for posterity, their thoughts and impressions while on their travels … now it is your turn! Derwent has added a new collection of four journals called ‘Safari’ to the range. These are ideal for taking on ‘safari’ to capture your first impressions and memories.

With a tactile faux animal hide cover, the journals are available in two muted shades: Warm Terracotta and Rich Earth. They will slip neatly into a back pack. They have a self coloured elastic band to keep them closed; a ribbon place marker; and a useful expanding pocket in the back for tickets and travel mementos!

The journals contain 40 pages of high quality 200gsm acid free cartridge paper and each colour way is available in either medium (120 x 170 mm) or small (90 x 140 mm) which retail at $19.95 and $15.95 respectively.

jasart
Deluxe Sketch Book
A4 (210 x 297mm)
DERWENT
JOURNAL
DERWENT
JOURNAL
SKETCH-BOOK
SKETCH-BOOK
SKETCH-BOOK
SKETCH-BOOK
SKETCH-BOOK
SKETCH-BOOK

Choosing supports is fundamental to success. The support is the surface on which you plan to paint. Supports can be either rigid, such as wood or masonite; or flexible, like paper or canvas.

CHROMA DISCUSSES THE RIGHT WAY TO CONSTRUCT A PAINTING

If you follow the advice of experts and prepare your paintings correctly, you will eliminate many of the long-term problems and disappointments experienced by acrylic and oil painters.

Choosing supports is fundamental to success. The support is the surface on which you plan to paint. Supports can be either rigid, such as wood or masonite; or flexible, like paper or canvas. If the paint film is to remain intact, the support must have good long-term stability and durability.

The main advantage of using a rigid support is that it induces less strain into the paint layers. Therefore you need only concern yourself with the movement of the paint film itself, rather than with the movement of both paint film and support. You can use a wide variety of supports for acrylics and oils – but whatever you choose to paint on, thorough preparation is essential.

Masonry surfaces used for mural painting often contain free alkali from the cement or plaster used, and this can attack some pigments. Wallboards made from woodpulp may contain tannin which can bleed through to the surface of the painting years later, leaving a dark stain. If you intend painting on wallboards, pale coloured ones are preferred.

To prepare, coat the surface with two coats of Atelier Binder Medium to provide a tough flexible seal coat. When this is dry the surface is ready to be 'gessoed'. Atelier Gesso is made from acrylic emulsion and contains titanium for whiteness and calcite grit to give 'tooth' for overpainting.

Canvas is by far the most popular material but it is important for you to know that there are major differences in performance.

Cotton Duck is often used because it is cheap, but it deteriorates in around 20 years. Linen Canvas is slightly more durable than cotton but is not as robust as people think – its main disadvantage is that like cotton, linen fibres respond to changes in humidity, swelling in humid weather and shrinking in dry weather. Careful ground preparation is essential. Polyester Canvas is chemically inert and does not deteriorate with time. In this respect it is much more durable than linen canvas. Its main advantages are that it can be bought in an off-white colour, it does not react to water and does not expand and contract with changing temperature and humidity levels. A stretched polyester canvas is stable without the need of a humidity controlled atmosphere. Additionally, stretched polyester canvas can be unrolled on the floor and will not creep or shrink when worked on.

In many parts of the world, temperature and humidity levels change quite rapidly – causing movement in any non-synthetic canvas support. This is the

Atelier
GROUND PREPARATIONS
BINDER MEDIUM
Use to prepare surfaces for acrylic and oil paintings
Also useful as an adhesive in collage techniques
CHROMA
Atelier
GROUND PREPARATIONS
LIQUID GESSO PRIMER
250ml 8.4 US.fl.oz
Atelier
MEDIUMS
MODELLING COMPOUND
250ml 8.4 US.fl.oz
Atelier
GROUND PREPARATIONS
GESSO PRIMER

principal cause of cracking in older oil paintings.

It is also important to consider essential grounds for acrylics and oils. Grounds are products used to prepare a surface painting.

Effective grounds should have good adhesion to the painting surface, particularly for canvas or boards. They should be flexible, have suitable 'tooth' for overpainting and create a good sealing barrier between the painting surface and subsequent layers of paint.

Prepared surfaces such as 'canvas boards' may be too absorbent to be pleasant to work on; and can be vastly improved by applying a coat of Atelier Gesso.

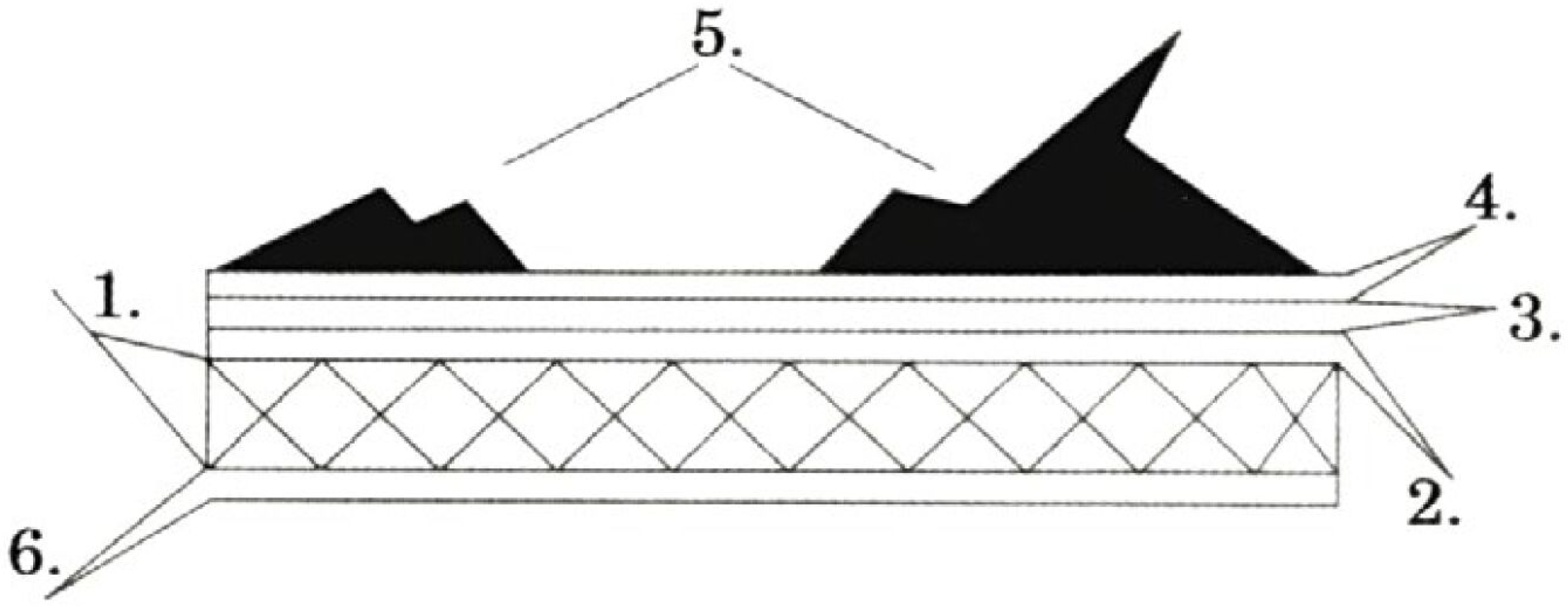
Acrylic grounds offer the best possible support for subsequent application of oil paint. They also prevent penetration of oil into cotton or linen canvas; which may rot, due to acid attack. Acrylic grounds offer a layer of 'shock absorption' between the substrate and successive layers of oil paint.

Although acrylics can be applied directly to a surface without first applying a ground, the acrylic binder from the paint is absorbed too quickly into the surface being worked on. The result is a drab and disappointing painting, with a disagreeably fast drying speed. Acrylic grounds are recommended before painting.

Often used in art schools as grounds, house paints are usually too brittle and too absorbent – causing drab paintings and speedy drying.

Atelier Gesso is a flexible acrylic ground with a high grit content which provides 'tooth' on which to paint. It is not water absorbent and does not suck the moisture out of your paint when you start to work on it. Gesso can be found in varying colours such as White, Grey, Black and Brown.

Atelier Modelling Compound is a heavy, opaque impasto paste made from calcite grit. It is flexible and can be applied to canvas supports. Coloured grounds can be achieved by using Atelier Modelling Compound tinted with the Atelier colour of your choice. Over a white background, Modelling Compound produces a creamy white surface.



Atelier Binder Medium is recommended to prepare and seal surfaces for painting with acrylics. This binder promotes good adhesion of the paint and prevents loss of moisture into the substrate. Binder Medium can be used to: Increase gloss and create translucent glazes when added directly to paint; isolate coats between paint layers; provide 'tooth' when Interactive Acrylic Gesso is applied over the top; and create adhesion for collage techniques.

Adding Binder Medium directly to acrylic paints shortens drying time. To increase working time, it is recommended to add up to 10 per cent Atelier Slow Medium which dries clear and glossy.

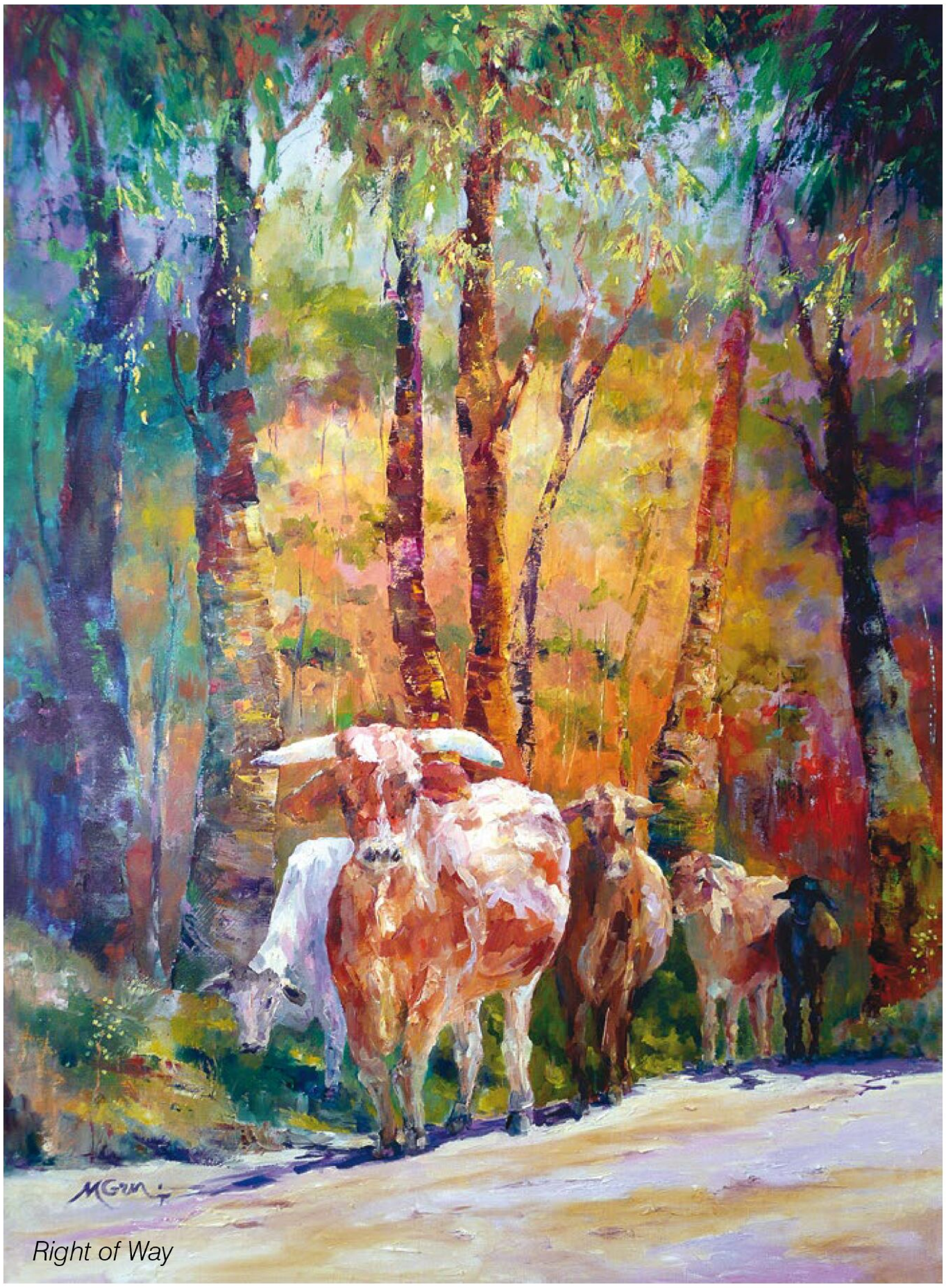
A cross-sectional diagram of a painting will show you the importance of proper preparation of your work. A painting in cross-section is a laminate composed of successive layers of paint. The ground may in many cases be thicker than the paint used in the painting and therefore may have a strong influence on the stability and lifespan of the work. The diagram consists of: 1. The canvas itself. 2. The layer of ground which fills the weave of the canvas and forms a continuous layer of prepared surface with 'tooth' on top of the canvas (a possible acrylic binder seal at the back of natural fibres, like cotton or linen, helps reduce the effects of humidity changes and reduces expansion and contraction of the canvas). 3. Underpainting layers of acrylic or oil paint. 4. Layers of oil paint (or further acrylic layers).
5. Islands of impasto in oil (or acrylic).
6. Possible acrylic seal at the back.

"Effective grounds should have good adhesion to the painting surface, particularly for canvas or boards. They should be flexible, have suitable 'tooth' for overpainting and create a good sealing barrier between the painting surface and subsequent layers of paint."

Nothing but the Best

By Marie Green

This artist can never give away or sell any work which she does not regard as her best. Now she can look at any of her paintings and still be pleased with them … and that's real peace of mind.



Right of Way

I have reached the magical French milestone of being 'a woman of a certain age'. My life began in Sydney quite a few years ago.

Now I live an almost idyllic life with my husband Tom … on our hill near the Queensland town of Agnes Water 1770.

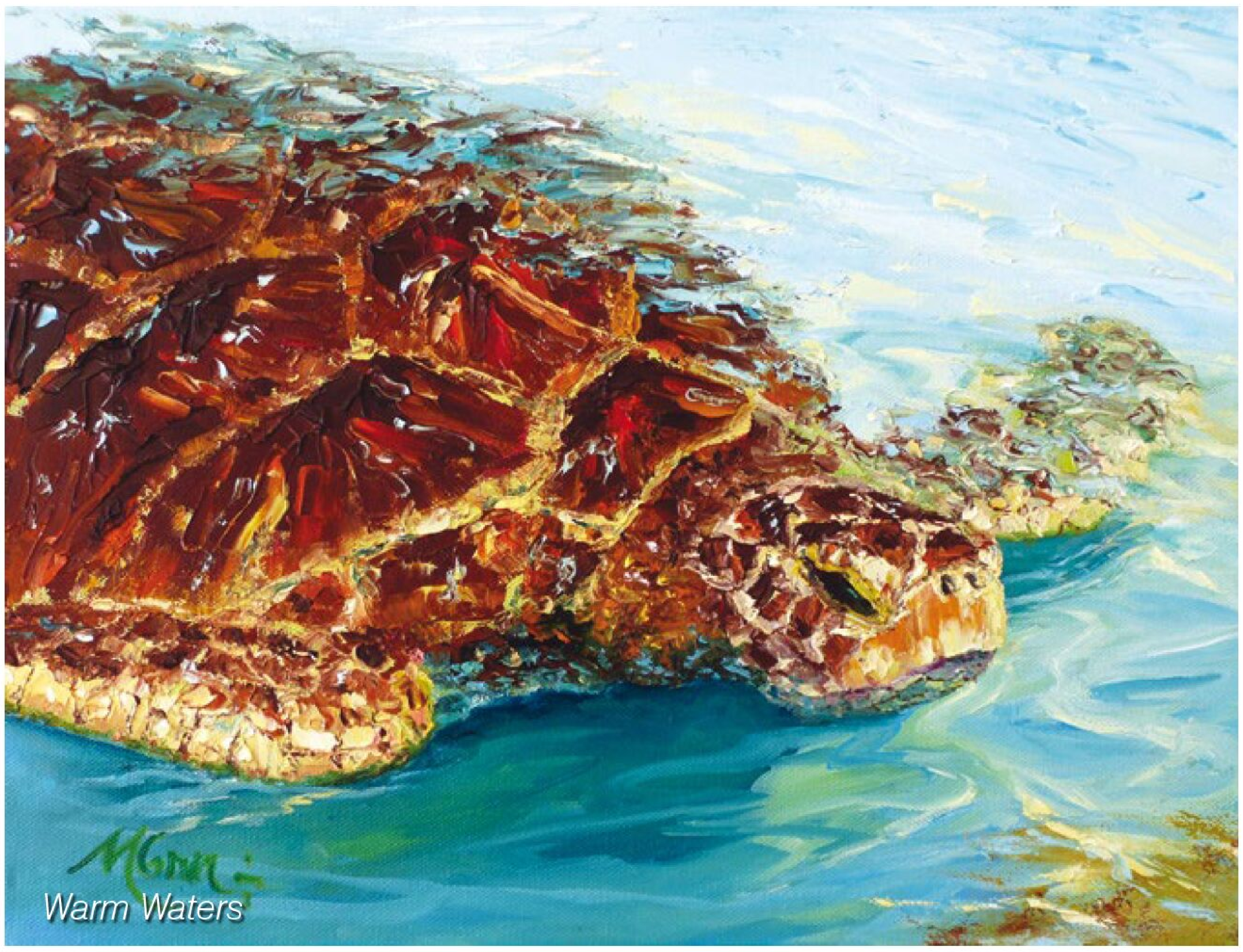
Five years ago, I left my professional life as a systems engineer and project manager in computer-telephony interfacing. Tom and I retired and decided to follow a relaxed lifestyle and enjoy the warm winds in our little part of paradise. After designing our new home, I felt an irresistible urge to start painting. That occurred on 16 October 2007, to be precise.

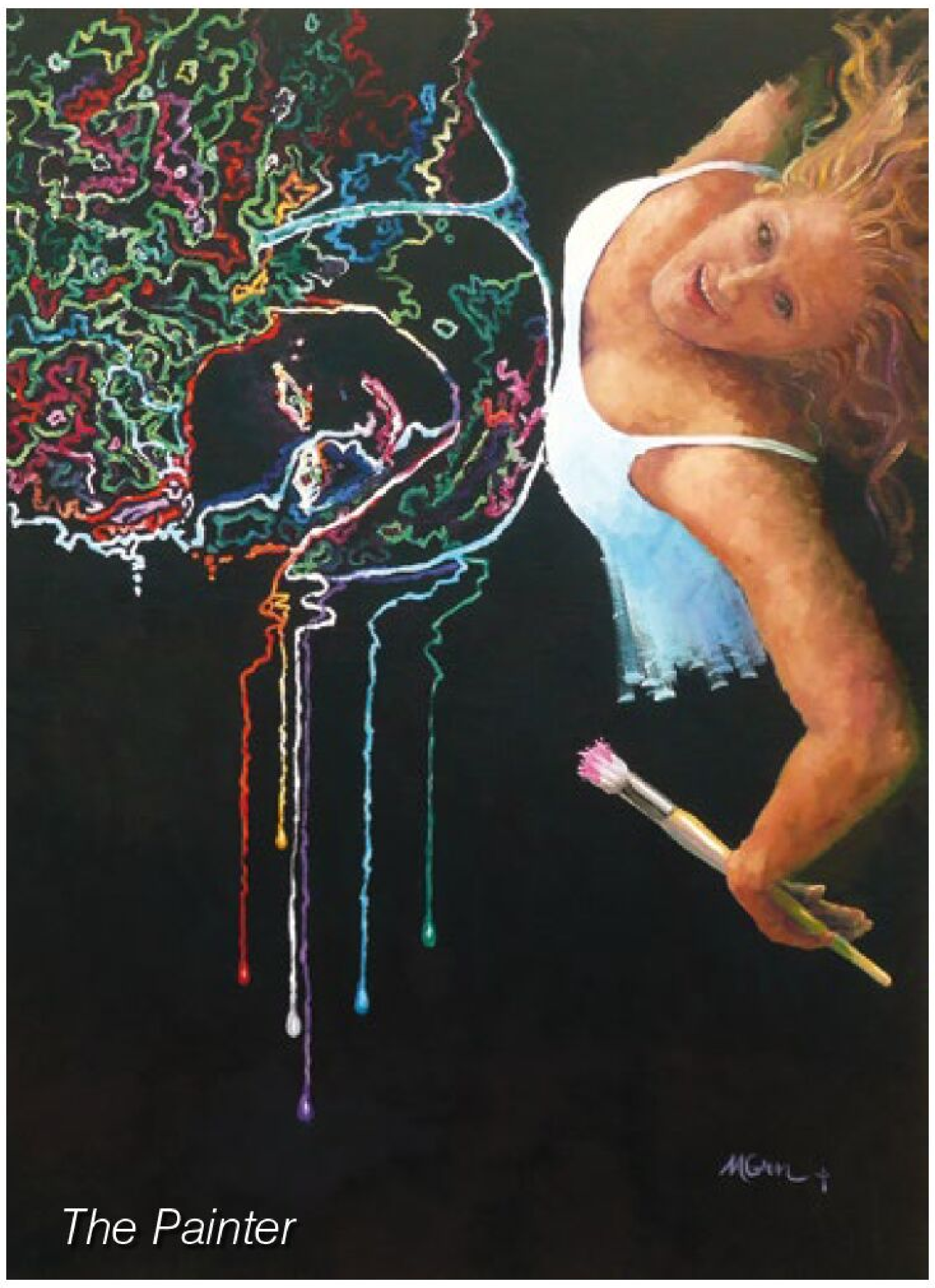
My studio looks out over green valleys to blue hills … with the only sound being the native birds as they chatter amongst themselves.

I cannot imagine having any desire to paint something ugly or grotesque. Our home is our 'Paradise Found' and it evokes the strongest emotions and desires in me to be creative and expressive with my art in a way that will add beauty, and perhaps joy.

Every decade since 1975, I have done one or two oil paintings and then stopped. But art for me now is different, almost overwhelming; to the exclusion of everything except my husband.

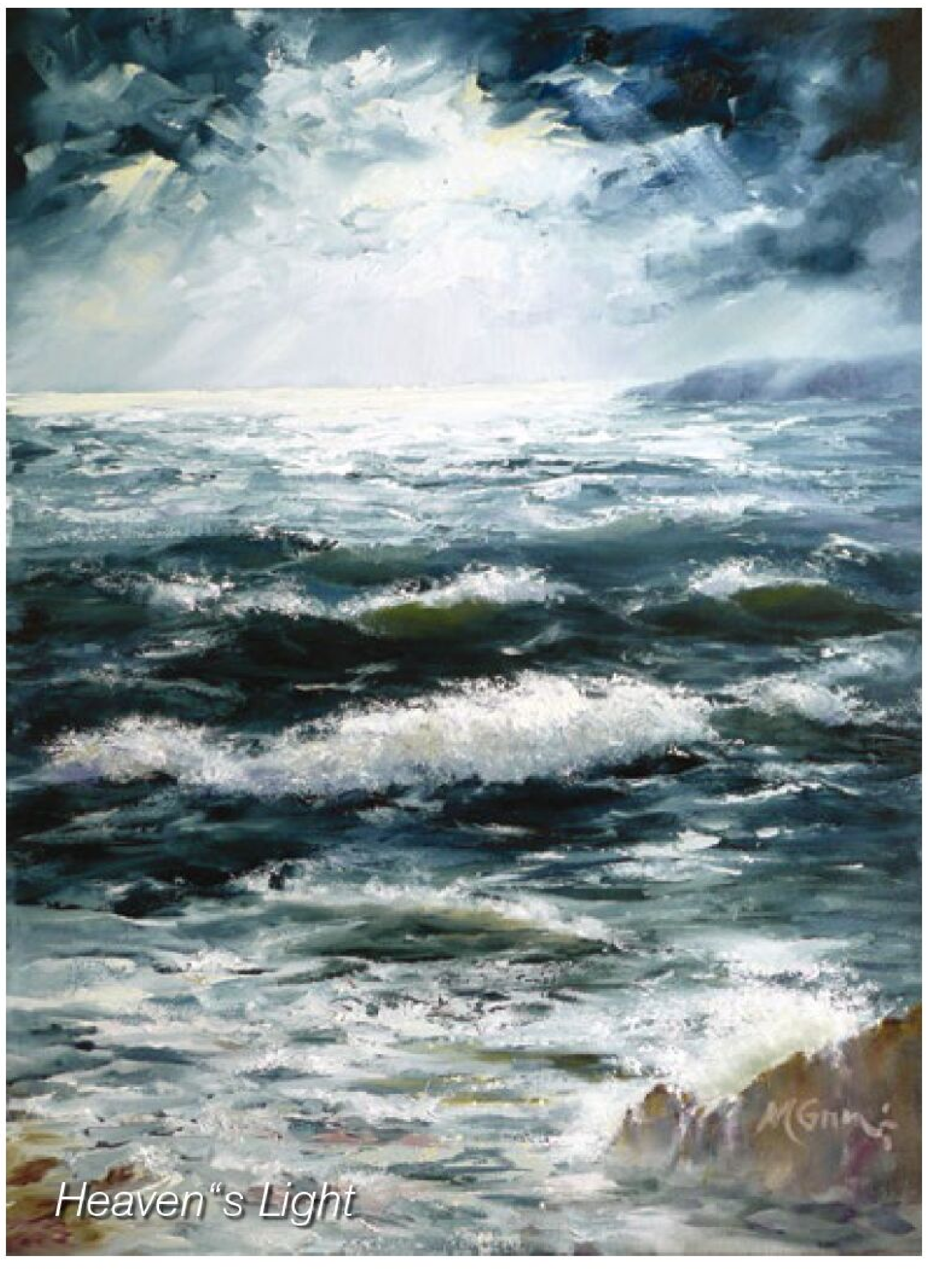
I am largely self-taught, but my older sister was a fine artist whose talent was obvious from the age of about

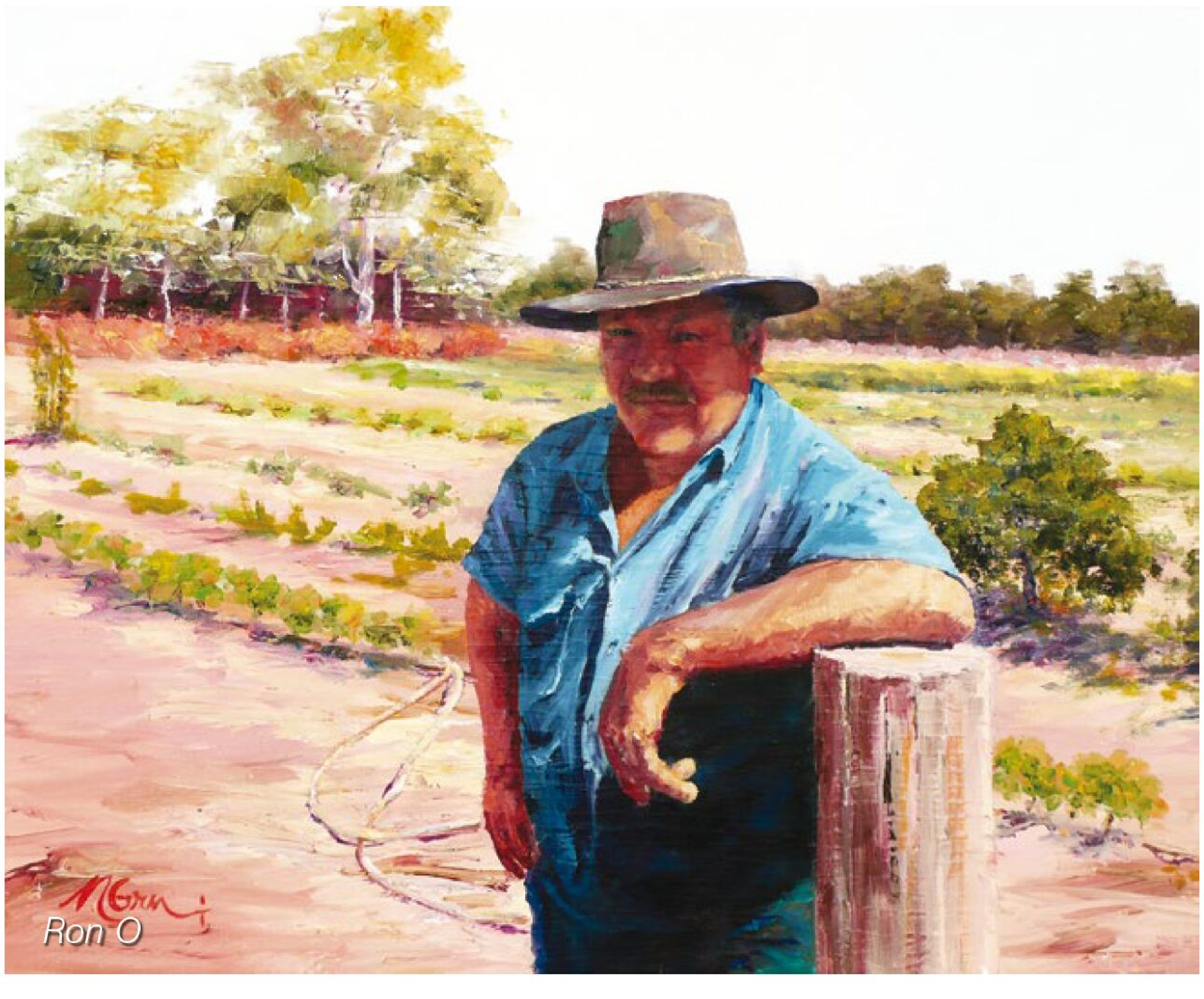

Warm Waters


The Painter

nine. My parents ensured she had the right lessons to foster her talent, and she continued taking workshops and lessons long after she became a successful artist. In the mid-'80s, we went together to Europe for five months to explore all the art museums. I learnt so much from that experience; much more than I realised at the time.

My way of 'teaching myself' was expensive but effective. Probably, the climate change police should have been pursuing me. I only paint with professional oils on good stretched canvas. I follow all the techniques for creating oil paintings that will last several lifetimes (if not longer). However, from November 2007 to September 2008, I burnt 18 completed canvases. I can never give away or sell anything I think is not my best. And this has paid off because now I can look at any of my paintings and still be pleased with them. That's real peace of mind. No skeletons!


Heaven"s Light


Ron O

> "I only paint with professional oils on good stretched canvas. I follow all the techniques for creating oil paintings that will last several lifetimes"

The reason I burn unacceptable work is symbolic for me – it burns into my head the mistake (or mistakes) I made. Fortunately I haven't made the same mistakes twice, although I have been very effective at making totally new mistakes!

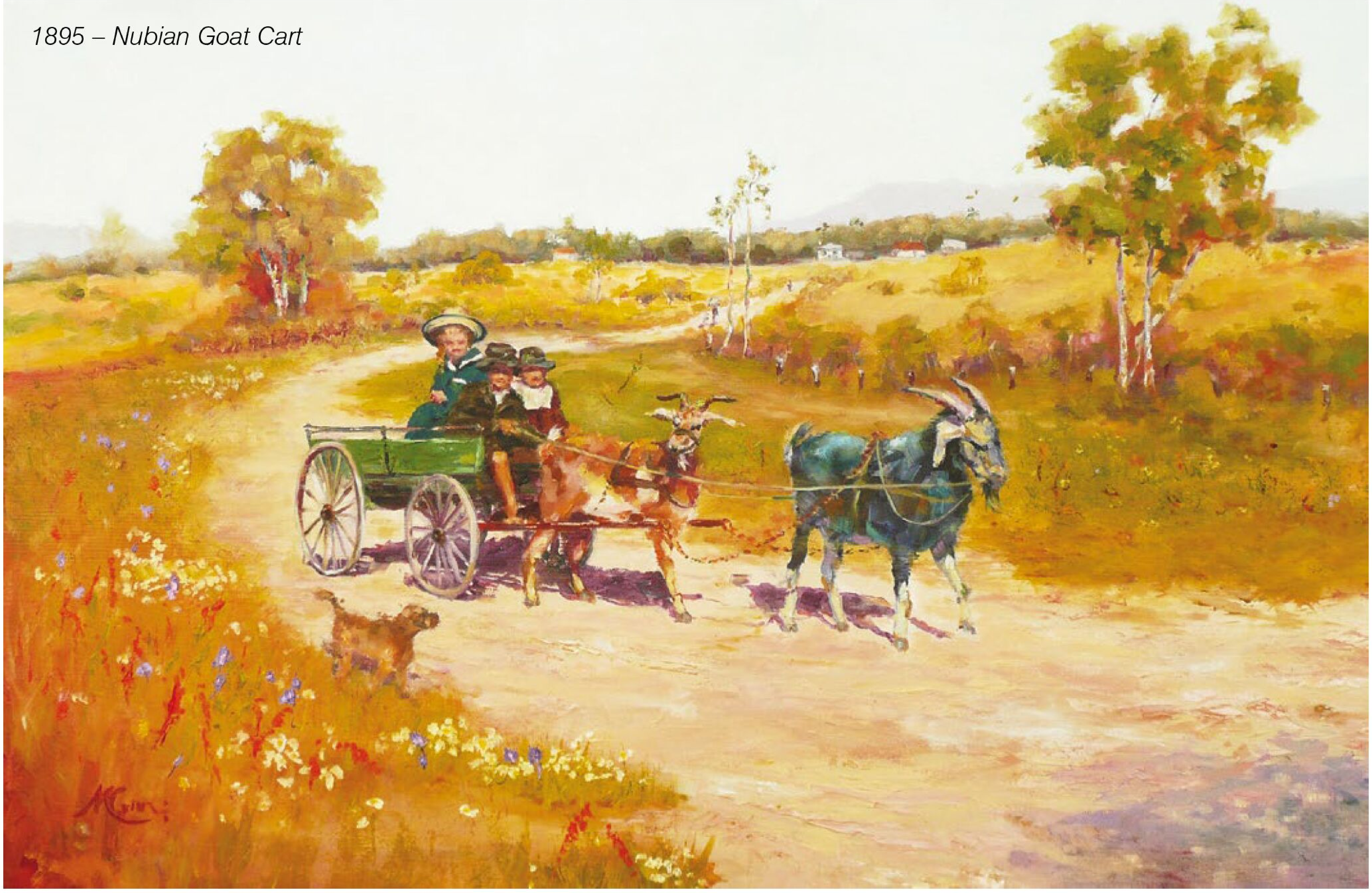
All of my work is representational, with a good dollop of impressionism. I am perfectly happy to stand on the shoulders of giants such as Rembrandt, Monet, Roberts and Streeton … just as they crafted their styles from previous Masters. And I will not be frightened off (or have my ambitions deflated) by the 'art world' reviews praising as 'innovative and original art' such objects as embalmed sharks floating in some yellow fluid; or heralding as a masterpiece a painting of white on white with white highlights.

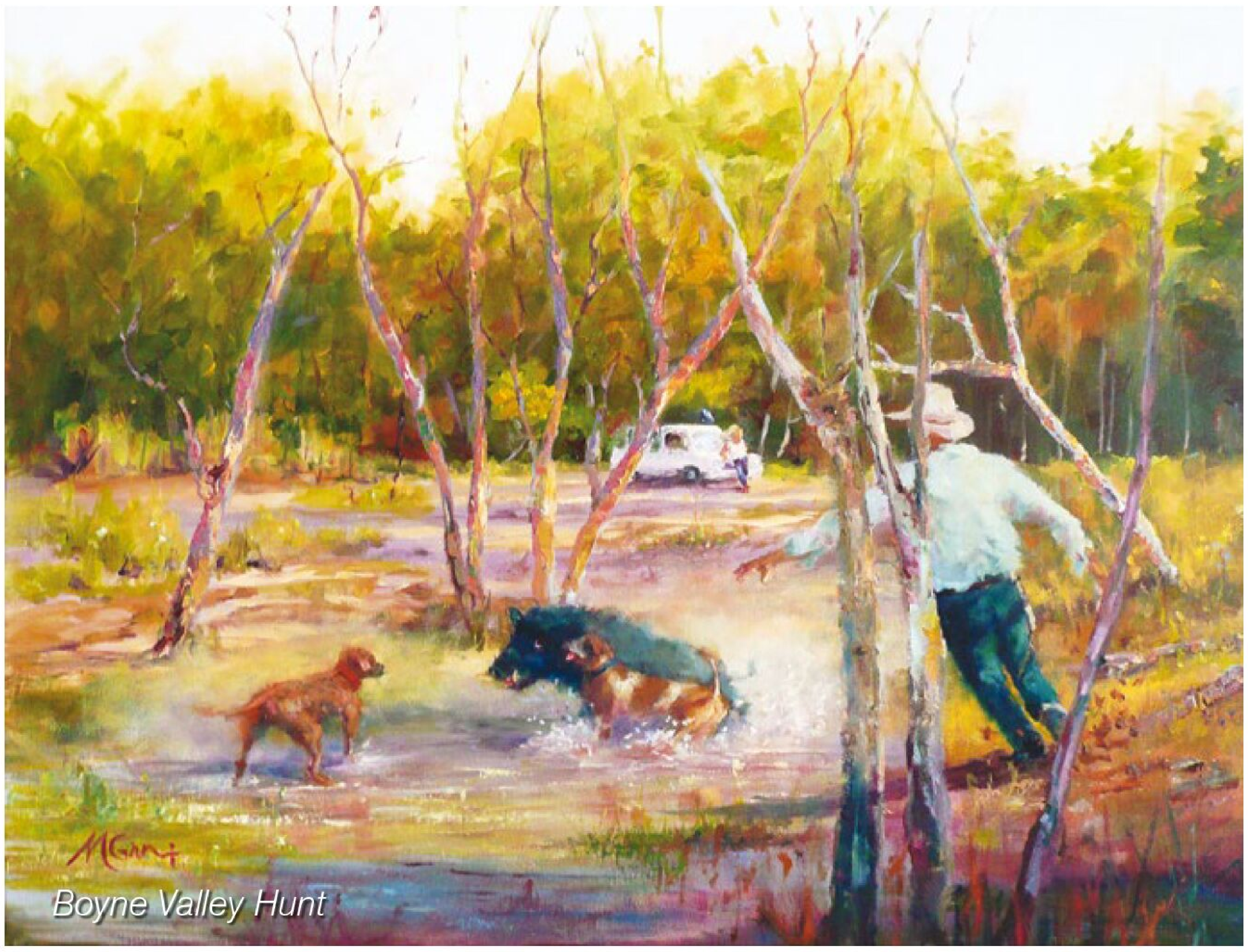
I have my style, I have my respect and passion, and I believe in myself. Equally importantly, Tom believes in me and my artistic aims. I don't need a gimmick. I am not going to do 100 paintings of the same object just so people will be able to spot a Marie Green on their friend's wall without having to decide the appeal or merits of the work. But they may of course spot a Marie Green painting by recognising my style eventually, I hope.

Another fallacy painfully repeated (by those who seem paid to repeat) is that to make one's mark as an artist today, one may only paint the current period. Thank goodness Zhiwei Tu, for example, ignores such claustrophobic restrictions.

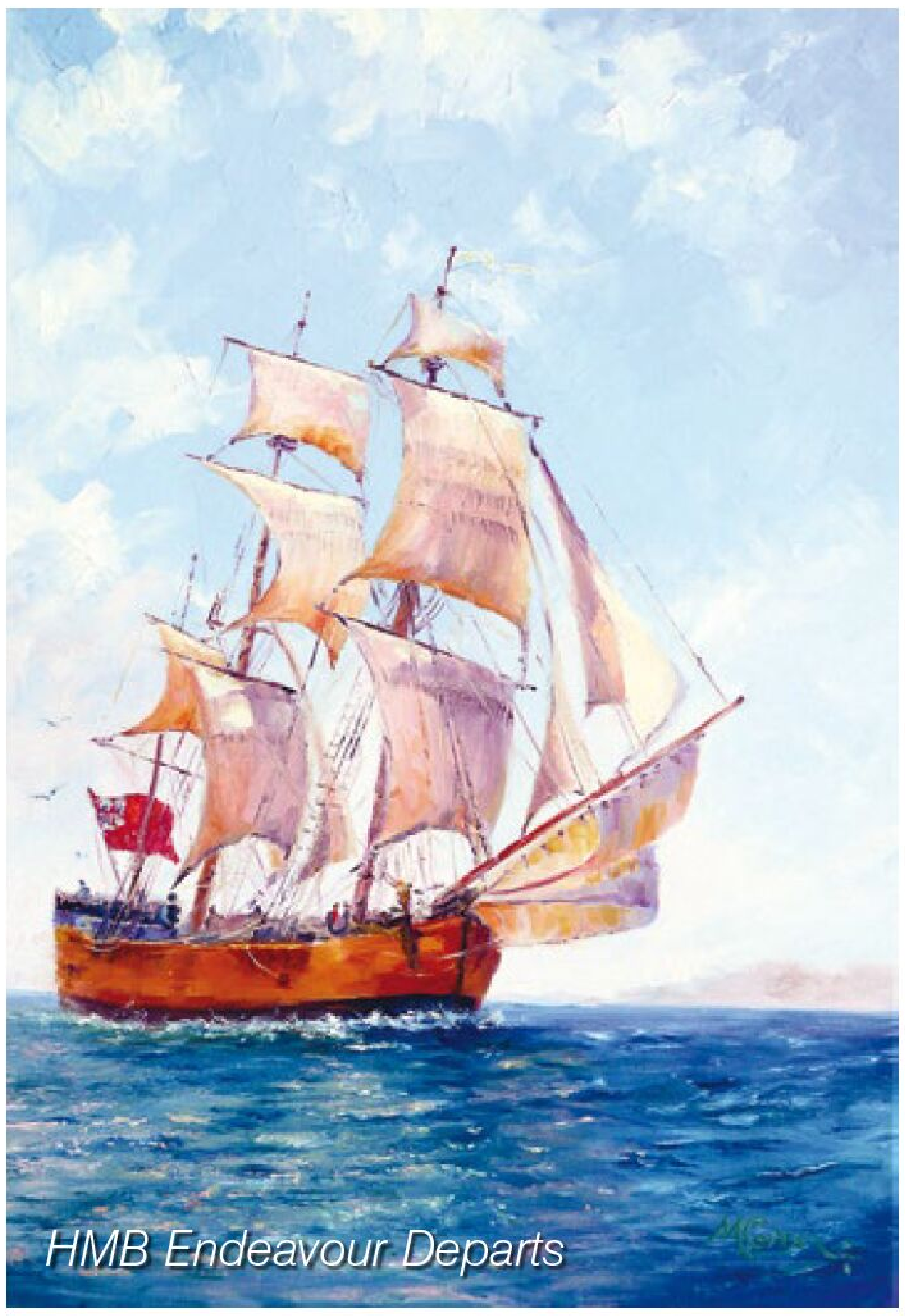
I have started a series of 30 paintings covering everyday life in Queensland in the period 1895 to 1985. I will be working on this series while also doing commissions and meeting my other painting commitments. My aim is to bring to life memories which my father, my grandmother, my mum and my

1895 – Nubian Goat Cart





Boyne Valley Hunt

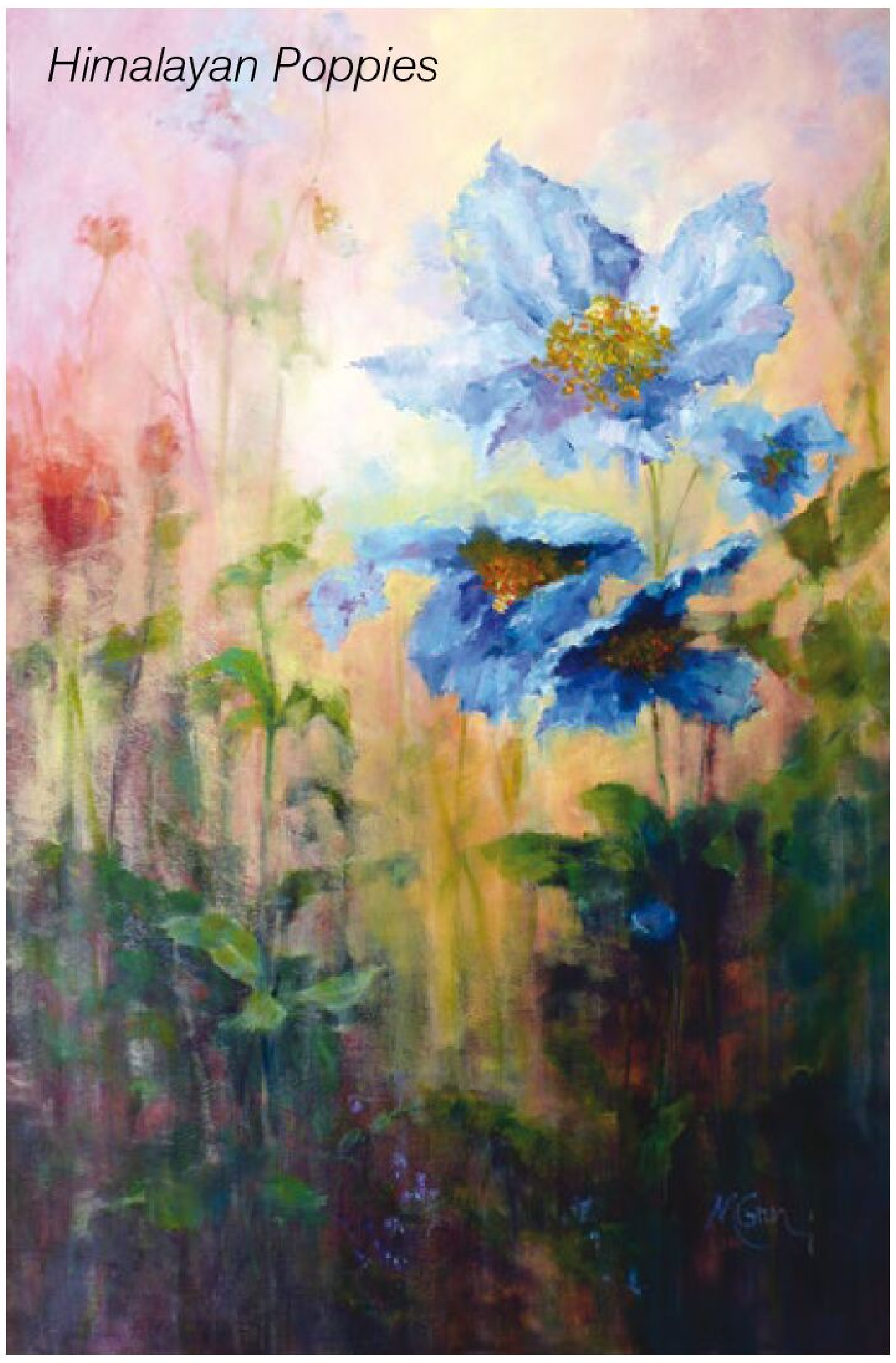


HMB Endeavour Departs

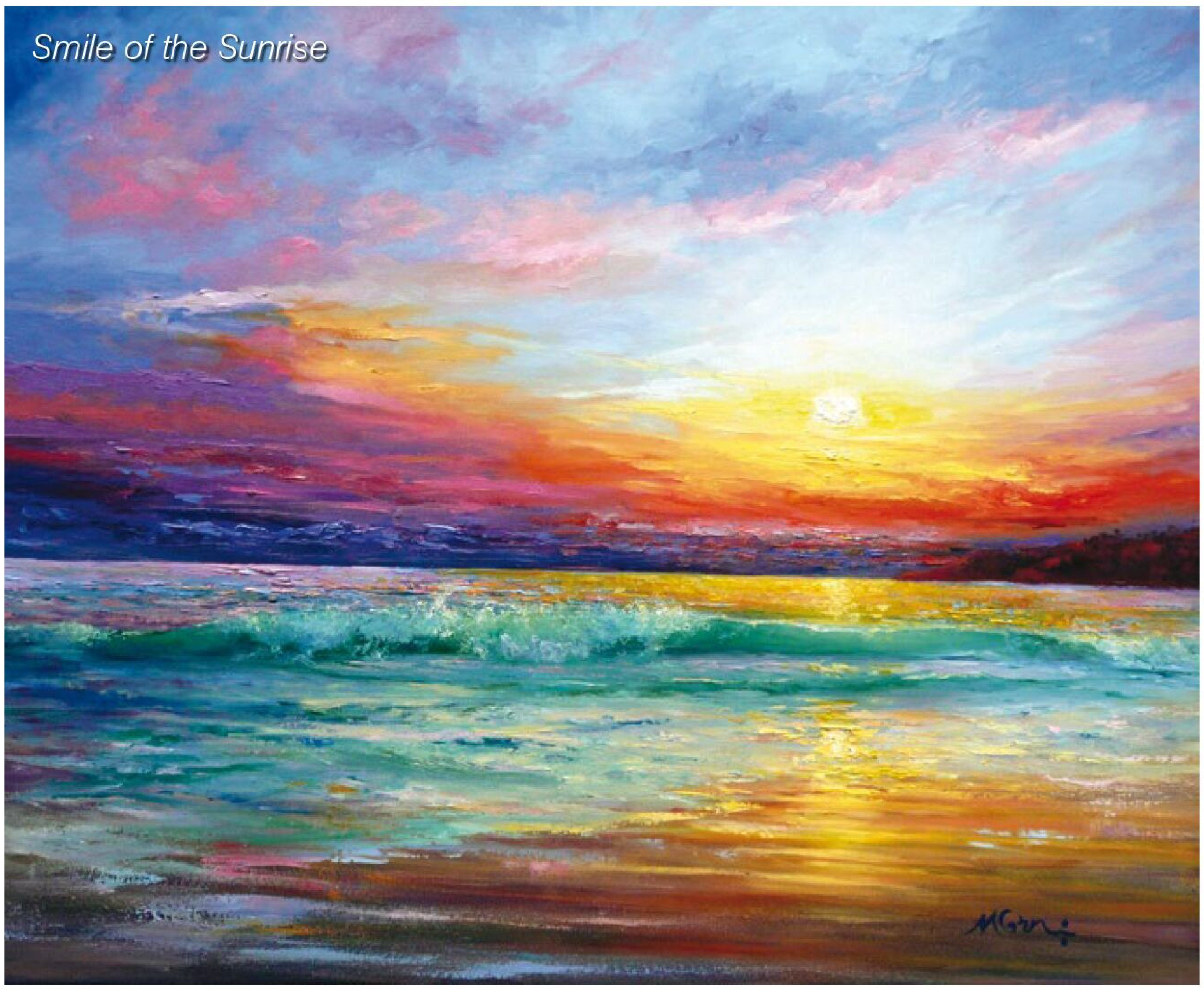
auntie have shared with me over many years. The first one I completed, '1895 Nubian Goats of Winton', celebrates the big strong goats that could stand tall enough to pop their head under a man's armpit. Originally they came to Australia from North Africa via England on the sailing ships, to provide fresh milk to the passengers.

There is only one significant piece of my art in my home. It is a self portrait, hanging in my studio, titled 'Allegory of Painting' … in applause to the marvellous painter Artemisia Gentileschi.

I think an artist's portfolio is incomplete without a self portrait – and I wanted this one to show my transition from the technology world to my life in art.



Himalayan Poppies



Smile of the Sunrise

> "I have quite a broad choice of subjects ranging through animals, flowers, marine scenes, Outback scenes and portraits – and I am drafting some figurative work at present."

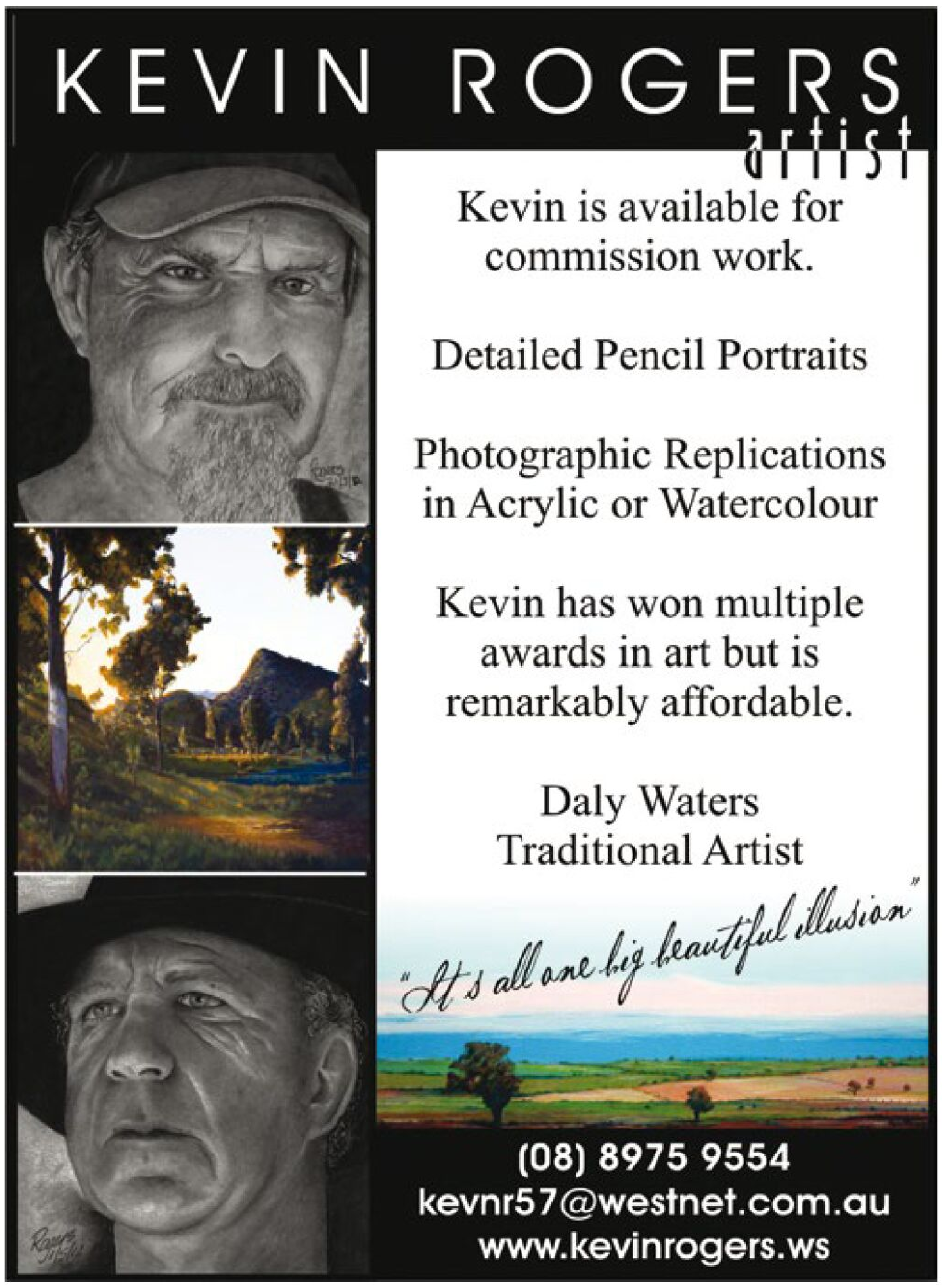
Aside from the self portrait, there is only one painting of mine that Tom and I really would have loved to keep, and that was 'Right of Way'. But we agreed that – at this stage in my art career – my major work was better off going to the collectors who purchased it. They already had two of my smaller pieces in their fine collection of art, and they are the sort of people who will treasure it and show it off in the best environment. What more could an artist ask for?

All my other pieces are currently exhibited at the Wide Bay Gallery in Maryborough, or waiting to go into an art competition; or they have already been sold. My very first sales (through my website) were to Canada, then the United States; and then Australians started catching on – thank goodness!

I haven't entered many art competitions due to the distances involved and the size of canvas I like to work on. However, I have been really thrilled with the success I have had … especially this year winning first prize in the Queensland Alumina Ltd award with 'Right of Way'.

I have quite a broad choice of subjects ranging through animals, flowers, marine scenes, Outback scenes and portraits – and I am drafting some figurative work at present. My husband and I work as a team in this, as in most things. He has a strong input at the conception stage and is my totally indispensible Head Critic. His very sharp eye and valuable sense of 'what works' have saved me from making some awful errors.

I hope we live for at least another 100 years … because I have so much yet to develop and create! ■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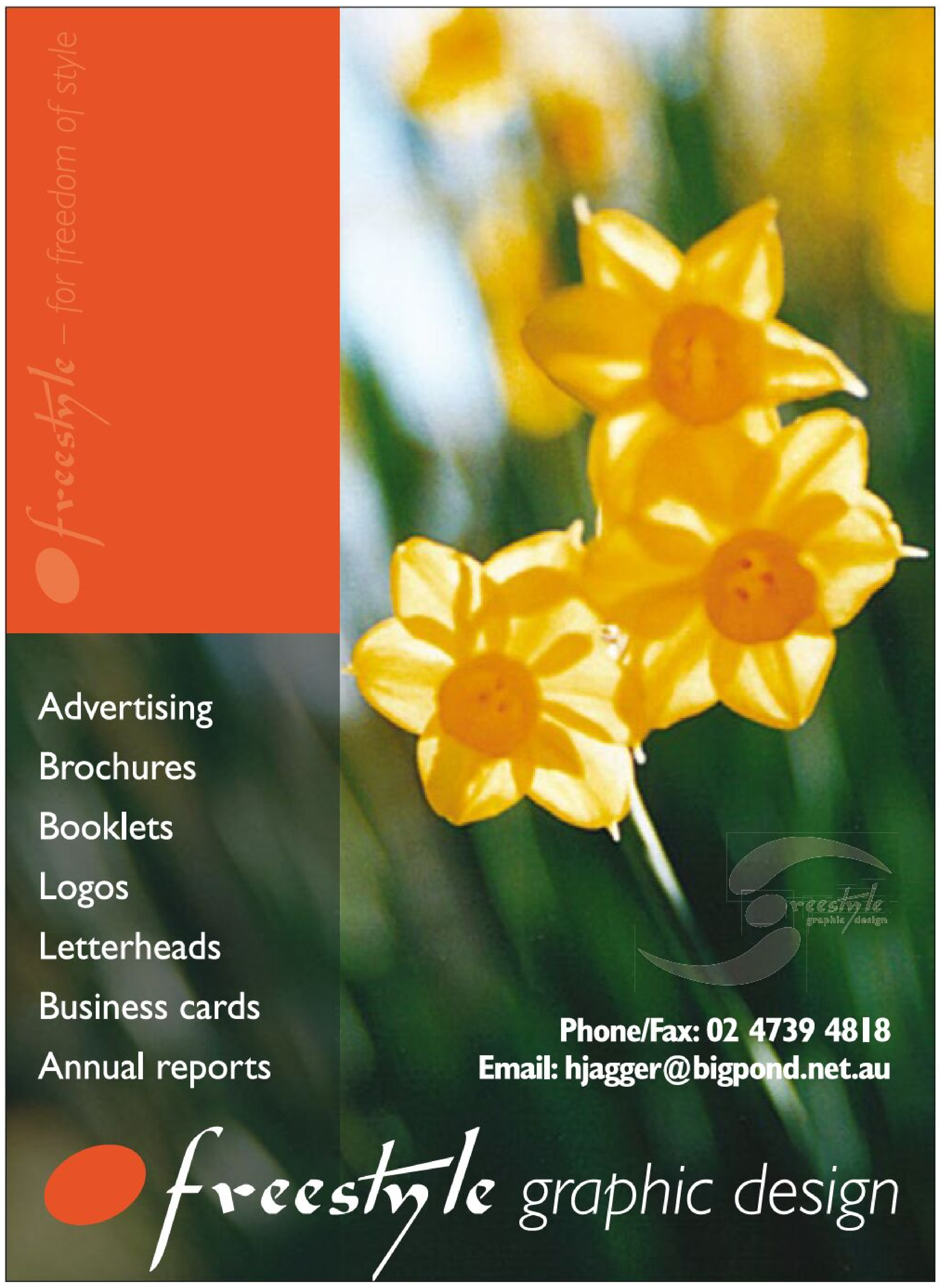
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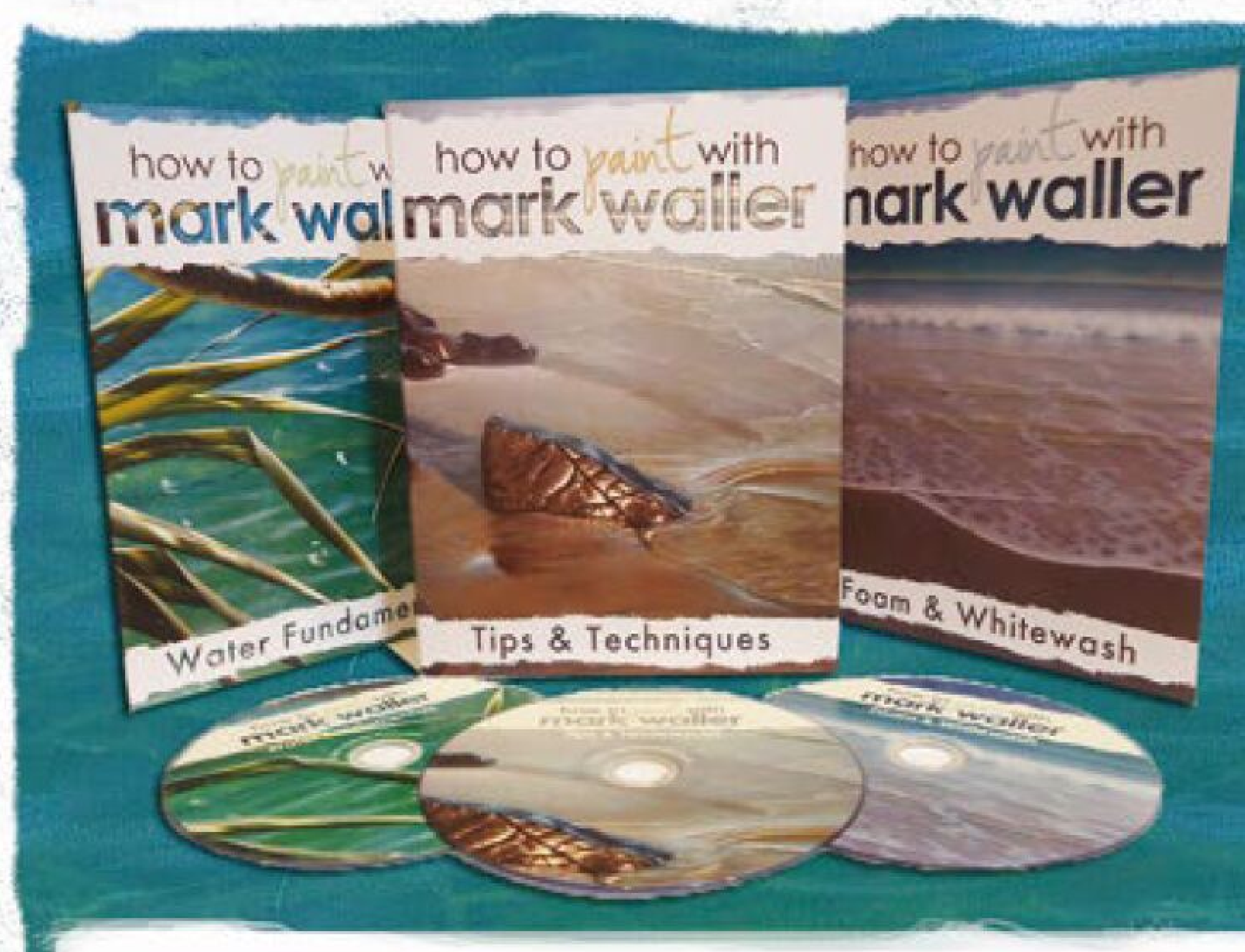

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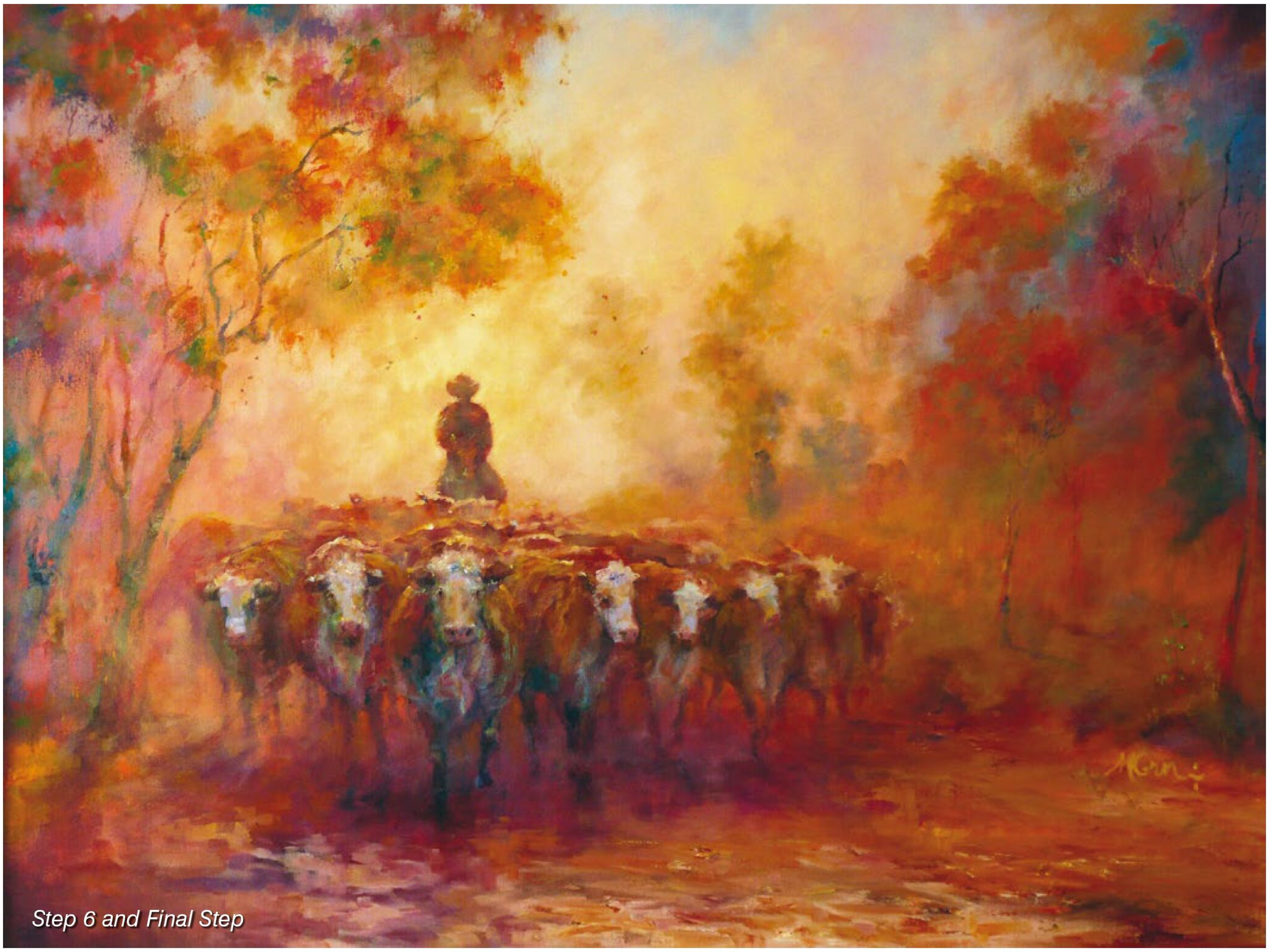
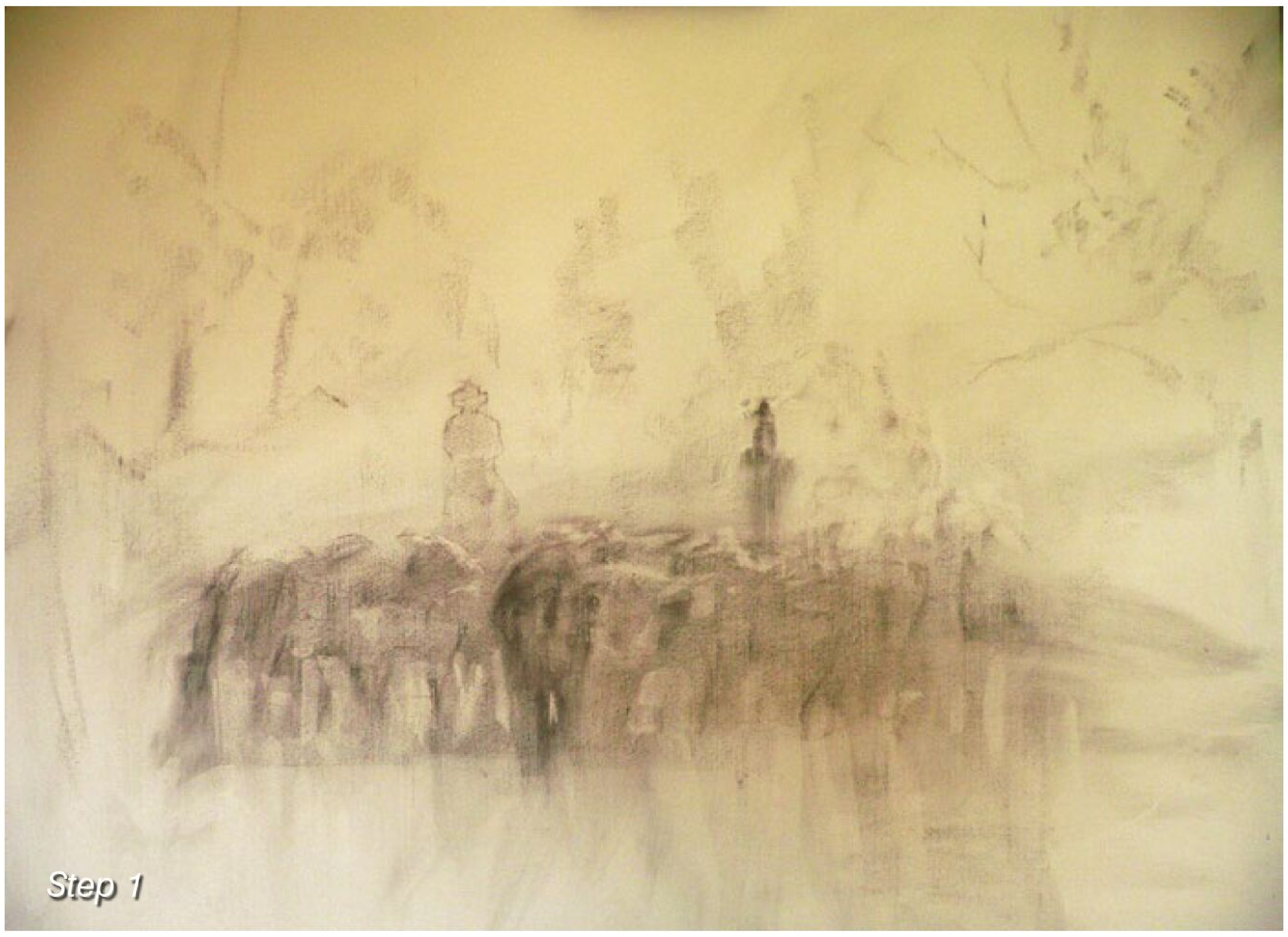
Down the Barcoo

By Marie Green

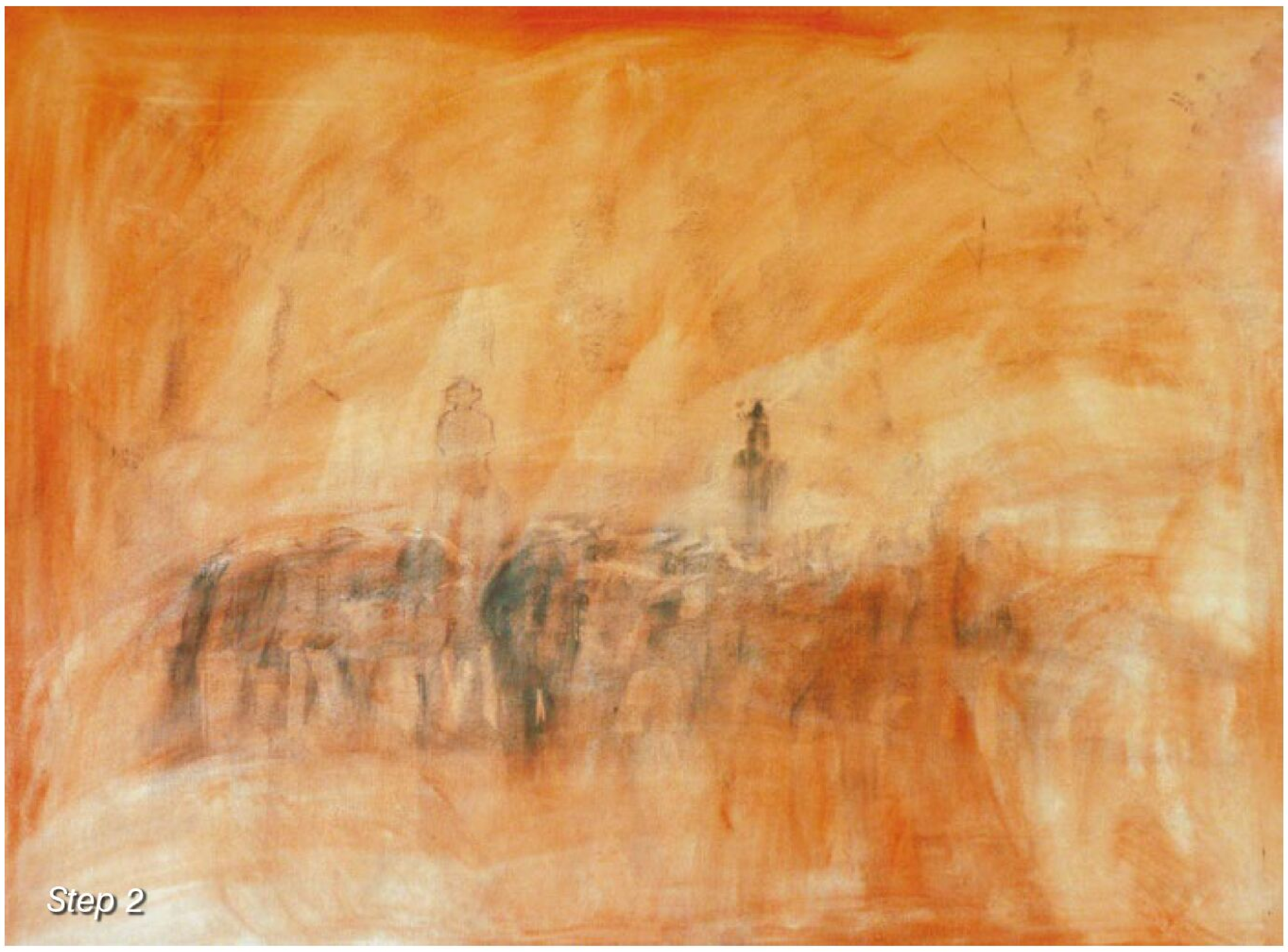
Nothing, not even a single blade of grass, is just one colour … and it is the joy of the artist to achieve a work of vibrant beauty. There is never a need to be stingy with colour.



Step 6 and Final Step



Step 1



Step 2

STEP ONE

I often work from plein air sketches done with oil crayons and combined with photographic references. However 'Down the Barcoo' arrived in my favourite way – just as an almost finished image in my mind's eye.

After preparing the canvas with two additional coats of gesso, lightly sanding at each coat, I loosely measured up the canvas into thirds vertically and horizontally. This brought the 'wide open space' into manageable sections to commence the charcoal outlines.

I roughed in my centre of interest (being the mounted drover), and from there laid in the masses for the lightest and darkest areas before outlining the dusty herd. I included just the suggestion of a hill and trees to develop heights. The canvas stayed on my drying wall for a day or so as I stood back, walked away, sat and cogitated, and made adjustments until I was satisfied.

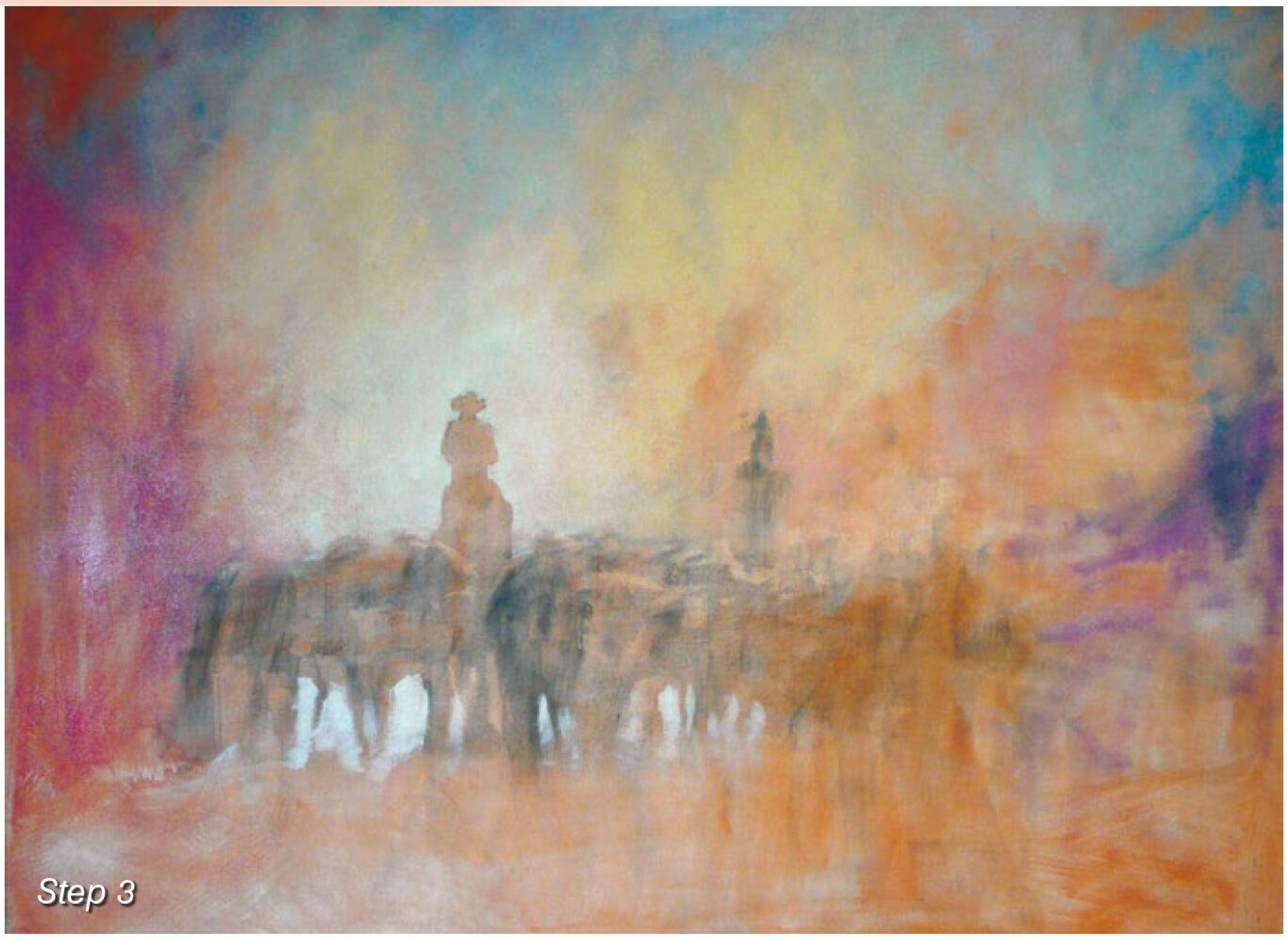
If I cannot see movement at the sketch stage, then the finished painting is never going to work for me. Maybe that is why I don't attempt 'still lifes'.

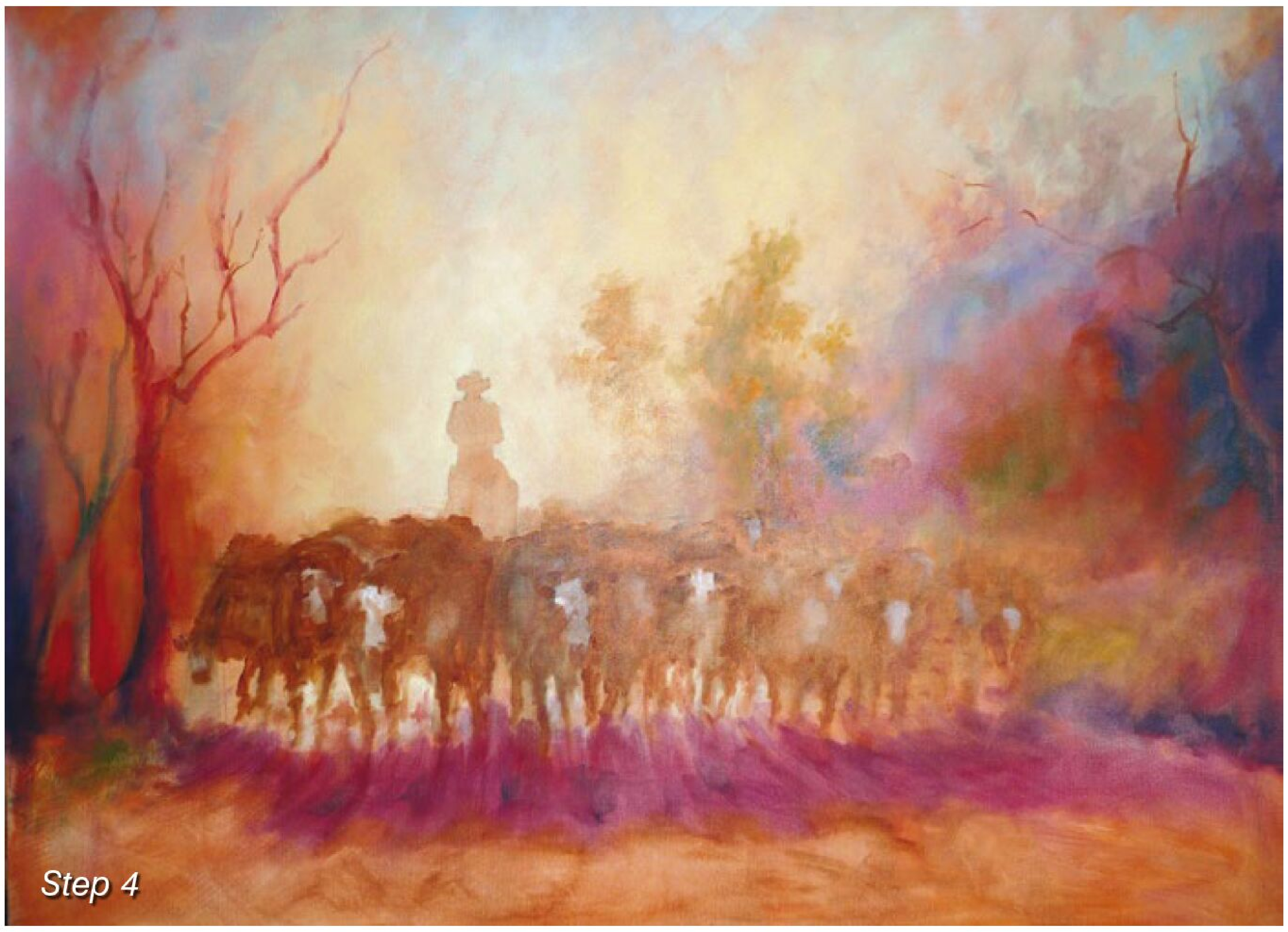
HINTS AND TIPS

- For impact: Remember warm against cool; hard against soft; and dark against light.
- Never try to add over paint that isn't either still wet or totally dry.
- More than three pigments mixed is begging to be mud.
- Paint or draw something every day.
- Do not sell or give away anything that is not your best. Burn it.
- Never buy any green in a tube except Phthalo. Green is best mixed by hand and eye.

MATERIALS

- East Art stretched canvas – 30 x 40 inches.
- Atelier Gesso Primer – White.
- Winsor & Newton Artists' Oil Colours.
- Floor easel.
- Sandpaper – P240 and P400.
- Faithful gesso brush.
- Vine charcoal.
- Kneadable eraser.
- Workable Matt Fixative.
- Shaving brush.
- Three long-handled bristle brushes.
- Twelve short-handled brushes in a variety of sizes.
- Walnut Oil and Low Odour Turps.
- Winsor & Newton Artists' Retouching Varnish.
- Imagination and memories.





> "I often work from plein air sketches done with oil crayons and combined with photographic references. However 'Down the Barcoo' arrived in my favourite way – just as an almost finished image in my mind's eye."

When I was comfortable that the sketch was the right backbone for the painting, I laid it flat on the deck and – with my old fashioned men's shaving brush – flicked off the excess charcoal. Next I sprayed with fixative and allowed the canvas a day to fully dry.

STEP TWO

I laid on a light turps wash of Cadmium Orange that would blend or rub away, depending on my needs for an area. Besides, a wash removes the blandness from the canvas and gets an early excitement going.

STEP THREE

This is what I call the 'underpants' stage. It makes or breaks the final work. Here I laid in the broad masses of colours I wanted to play under the finished layers – peeping through, in a sense. It was more than a stain and less than a discreet layer. It needed to thoroughly dry before proceeding, and that took two days.

I love to use as much of the rainbow as my eyes perceive. Nothing, not even one blade of grass, is just one colour; and it is the joy of the artist to allow visual senses full flight to achieve a work of beauty. There is never a need to be stingy with colour. Well … that's my take on it.

STEP FOUR

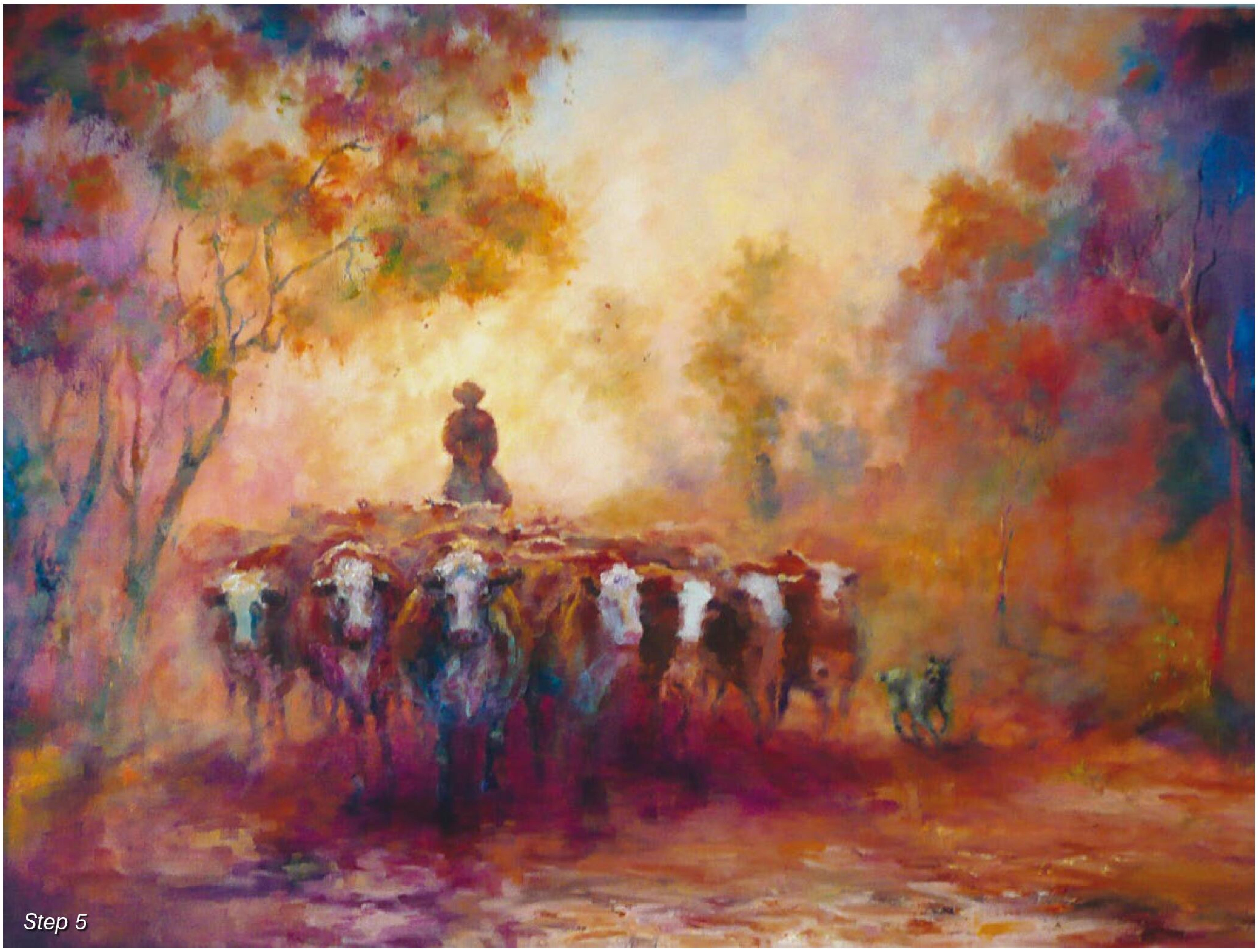
Fun things started to happen here. The drover took on substance and I began work on the cattle as they jostled and bumped each other along the road. Basic shapes with emphasis on darks and lights quickly progressed to interactions in the herd. The warm highlights at play on the beasts' backs were complemented by the cooler lights in their faces and reflections from the track.

Shapes and emphasis on the canvas periphery came next. A cattle dog appeared from nowhere – he lived but for a day, meeting his ultimate demise with all the dignity of these faithful friends. An artist must always be on guard for such unexpected visitors. They may 'seem like a good idea at the time' but can ultimately ruin a good composition. I also found a very pregnant cow leading the herd – she gave birth very rapidly!

STEP FIVE

Careful checking of edges now kept the sense of movement and directed the viewer's eye. The secondary areas were completed and checked again – to be sure that both the hues and the values played well off each other.

This was a large painting with a lot of shapes and quite an extensive palette.



Step 5

STEP SIX

When the work was dry, I scumbled some of the dust effects with Phthalo Blue, Windsor Violet and Indian Yellow; and toned down some other areas with Raw Sienna.

So far for this painting, I think I had walked at least 25 kilometres to and from the easel. I like to use short-handled brushes … but of course I like to view my work from at least three to four metres away.

My favourite Rembrandt quote is: "A painting is not made to be sniffed!"

Final Step

A wonderful artist friend and mentor of mine, Talya Johnson of Alaska, has many a time gently admonished me for rushing the penultimate step. And as in most matters, she is right. She calls this 'proofreading a painting'. Basically, it means taking the time to check for drafting errors such as shadow going in the wrong direction; or something like a six-fingered hand. It is vital to check that the finished painting delivers the initial concept (or better); and to ensure consistency of temperature in the scene; and check that all edges lead the viewer to the focal point. In short, one mustn't rush through the checklist that every artist keeps in their head or written down.

I had kept my palette 'leavings' in an airtight container so that any fixes I needed to make at this stage would match.

Since there were a few of dull spots where I reworked a small area, I freshened these up with Winsor & Newton Artists' Retouching Varnish.

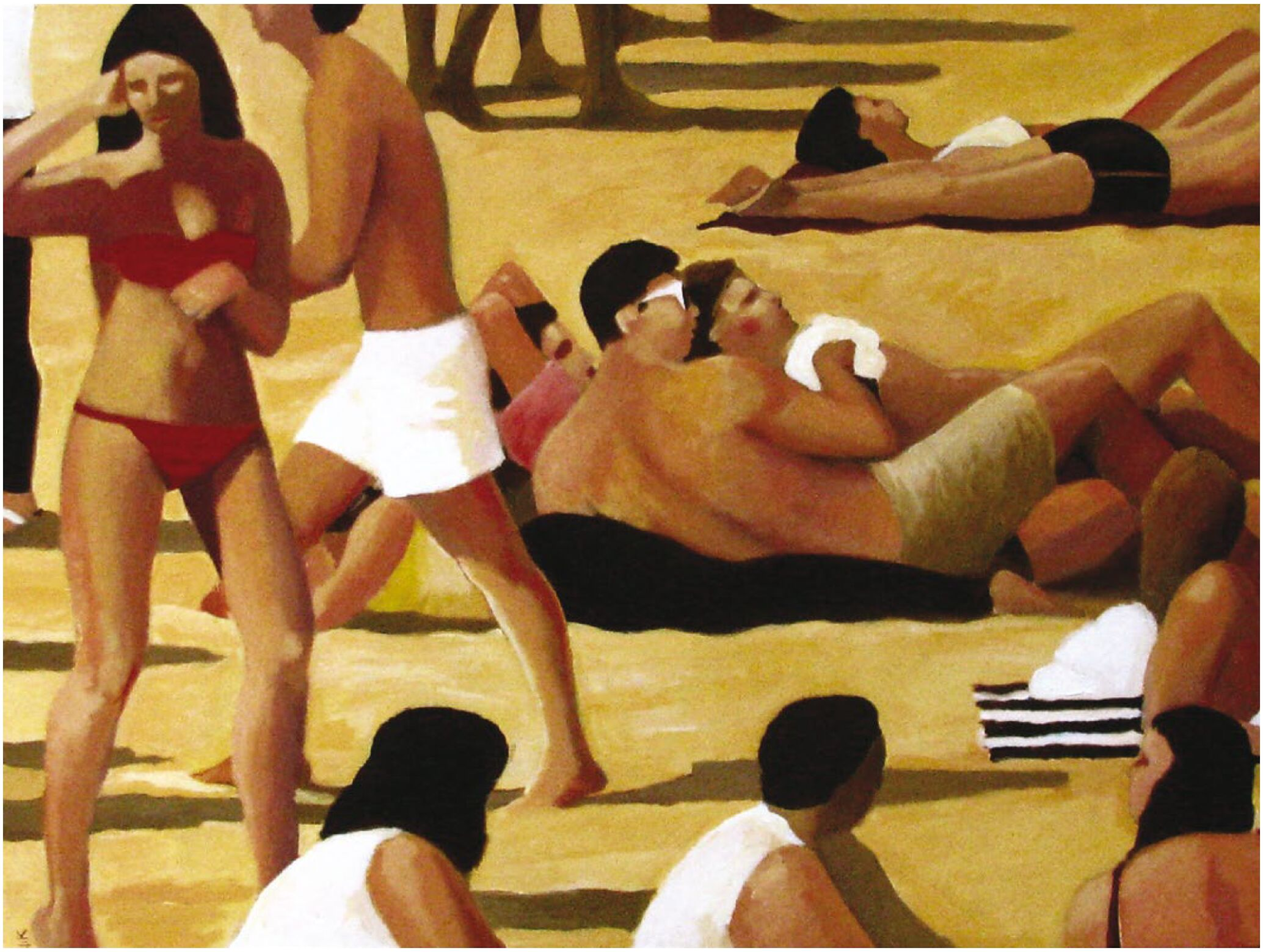
The signature came last. I like the signature to blend into the work rather than interrupt the viewer's eye. I put the year on the back of the canvas; and I recommend a final varnish after 12 months if required. ■

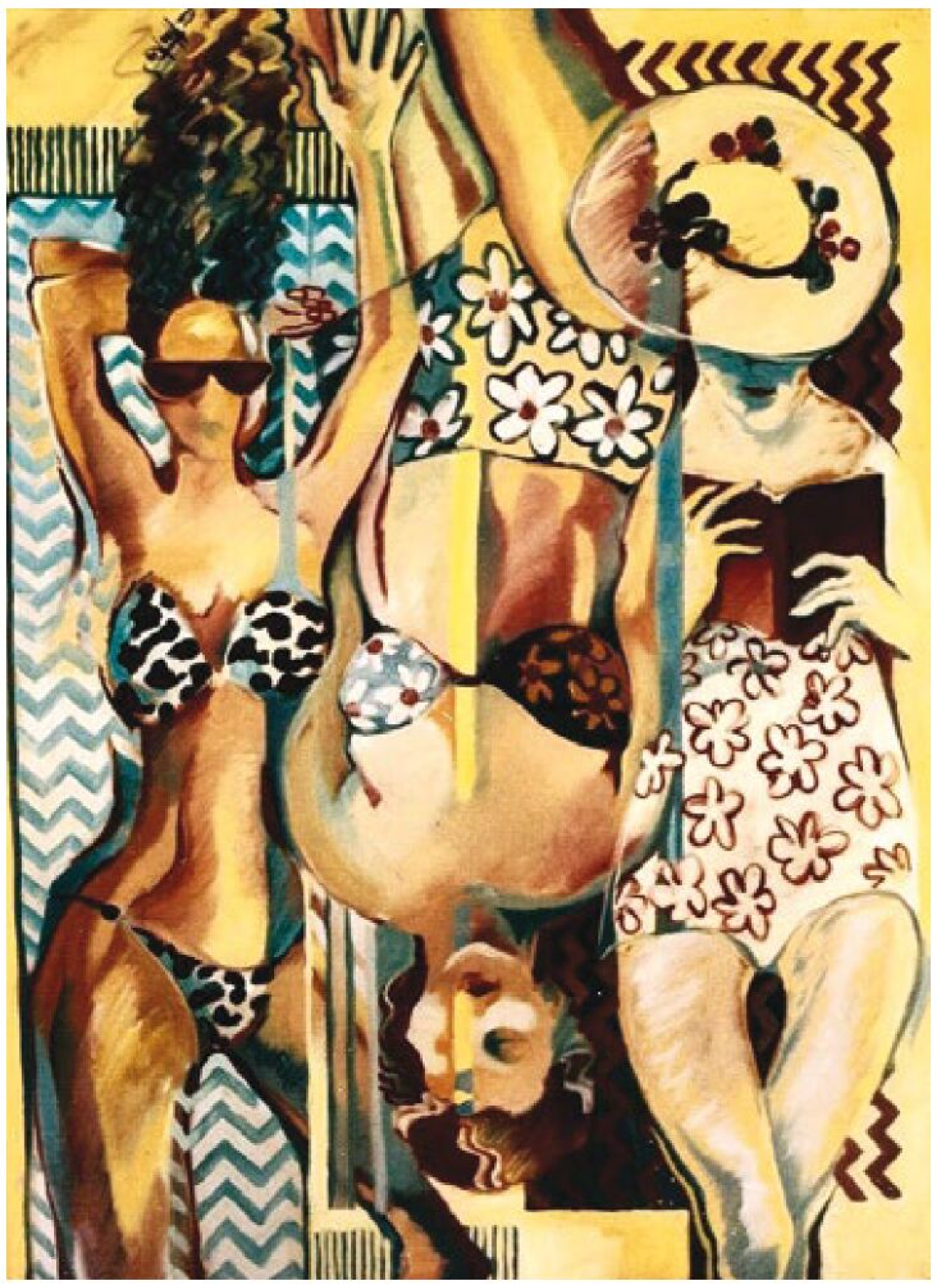
It is vital to check that the finished painting delivers the initial concept (or better); and to ensure consistency of temperature in the scene; and check that all edges lead the viewer to the focal point.

Fired Art Gallery and Retreat

Contributed by Sally Hook

Beautiful art galleries are located all over this country, hosting and promoting the work of Australia's diverse exponents of art. Artist's Palette magazine showcases a broad selection of these venues. In this Issue, we look at Sally Hook's artistic mindset and her Fired Art Gallery and Retreat on the mid north coast of New South Wales.





Above left: Fired Art Gallery interior
Above right: Three Ages Of Eve

Opposite page:
Hot Sunday at Bondi

I love the human body, it seems … because I return to it time after time in sculpture, painting and drawing. Maybe I got the bug from poring over 'Gombrich' or 'The History of Art' – both long time art reference books – losing myself in fascination with the past. From fleshy, sinuous Rubens paintings to 'The Nike of Samothrace' (a winged but headless woman, marvelously sculpted); or the colourful and pleasure-giving abstractedness of Paul Cezanne. I loved it all.

I spent my childhood learning how to draw from 'how to draw' books. I loved horses, so I drew them over and over – using ovals and boxes in constructing form. My early efforts weren't remarkable, but there was something there. I was an average, artistically minded kid. But when the time came to make a decision on my future, art was my natural choice.

I went to art school in Victoria and worked in advertising in Melbourne during the 1970s. I eventually moved to the country to begin a new life.

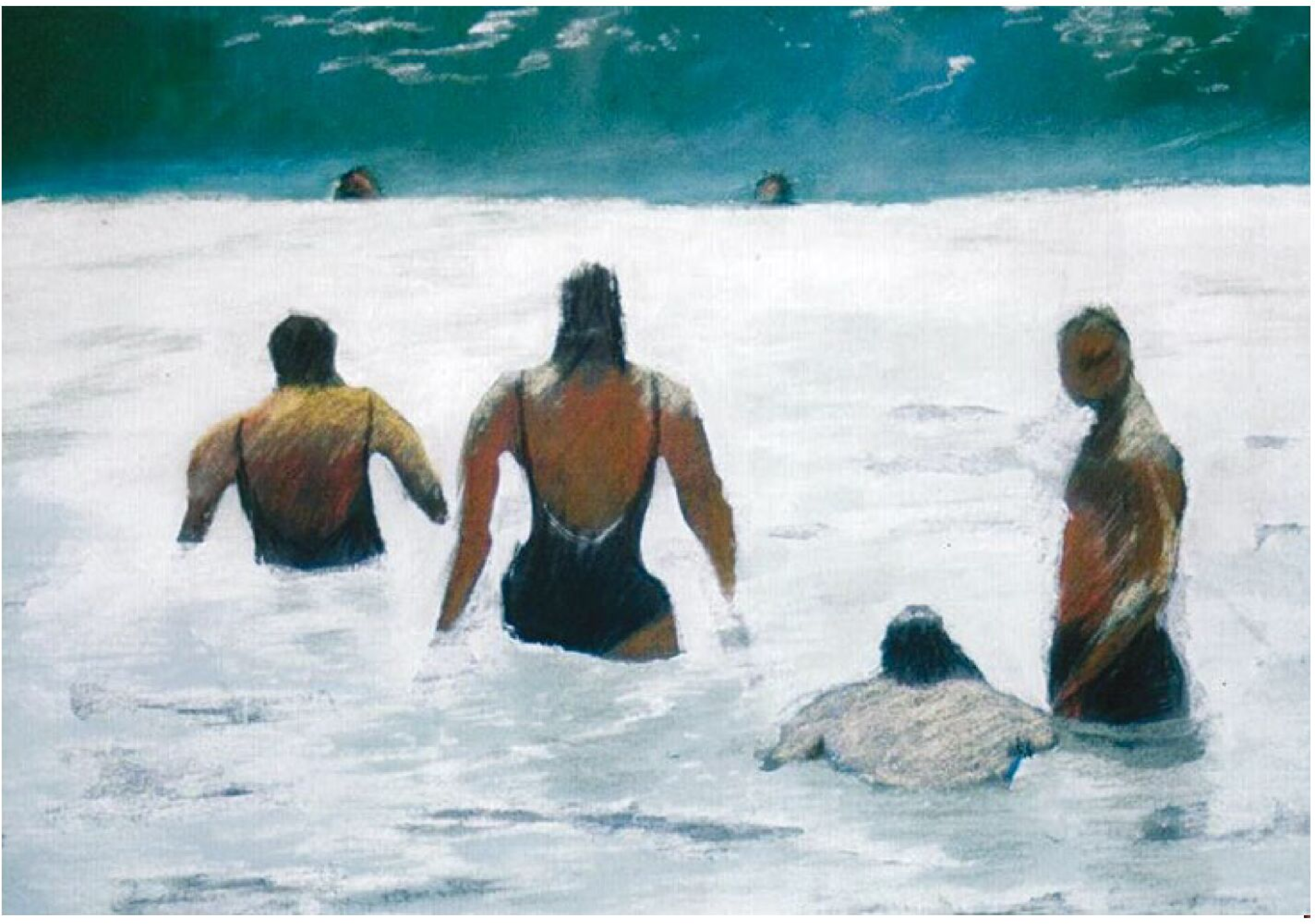
My partner and I built a hand-made house in the 1980s, on a forest block close to Nambucca Heads on the mid north coast of New South Wales. The accompanying studio was built to keep me out of the house with my arty messes.

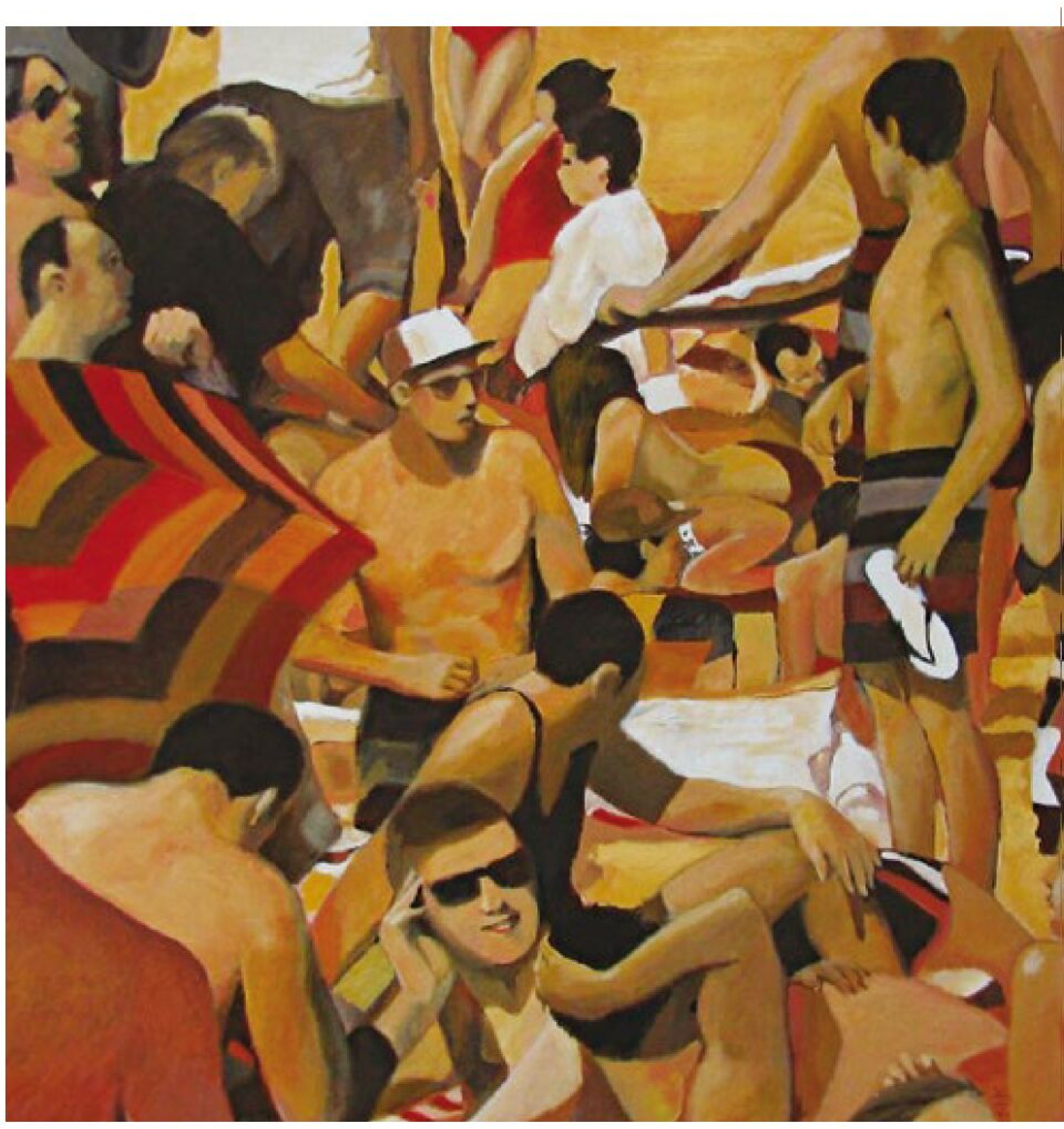
Over the years I have spent the majority of my time with clay, because I had an immediate response to it. I continue to enjoy its properties and endless potential. Now I also want to paint and draw to enjoy the difference in materials, the conceptual challenges, and the pure engagement in applying paint.

Most of my work is based on human experience and presentation of human activities.

I live close to the beach, so the colour and diversity of the people found there is a constant theme which I like to explore. I play with the compositions, making things work together in a way that balances but still has some intrigue to it. Elements converge. Lines of sight

> Most of my work is based on human experience and presentation of human activities.





Above right: Beach I
Below left: Beach Colour Study
Below right: Hot Sunday II

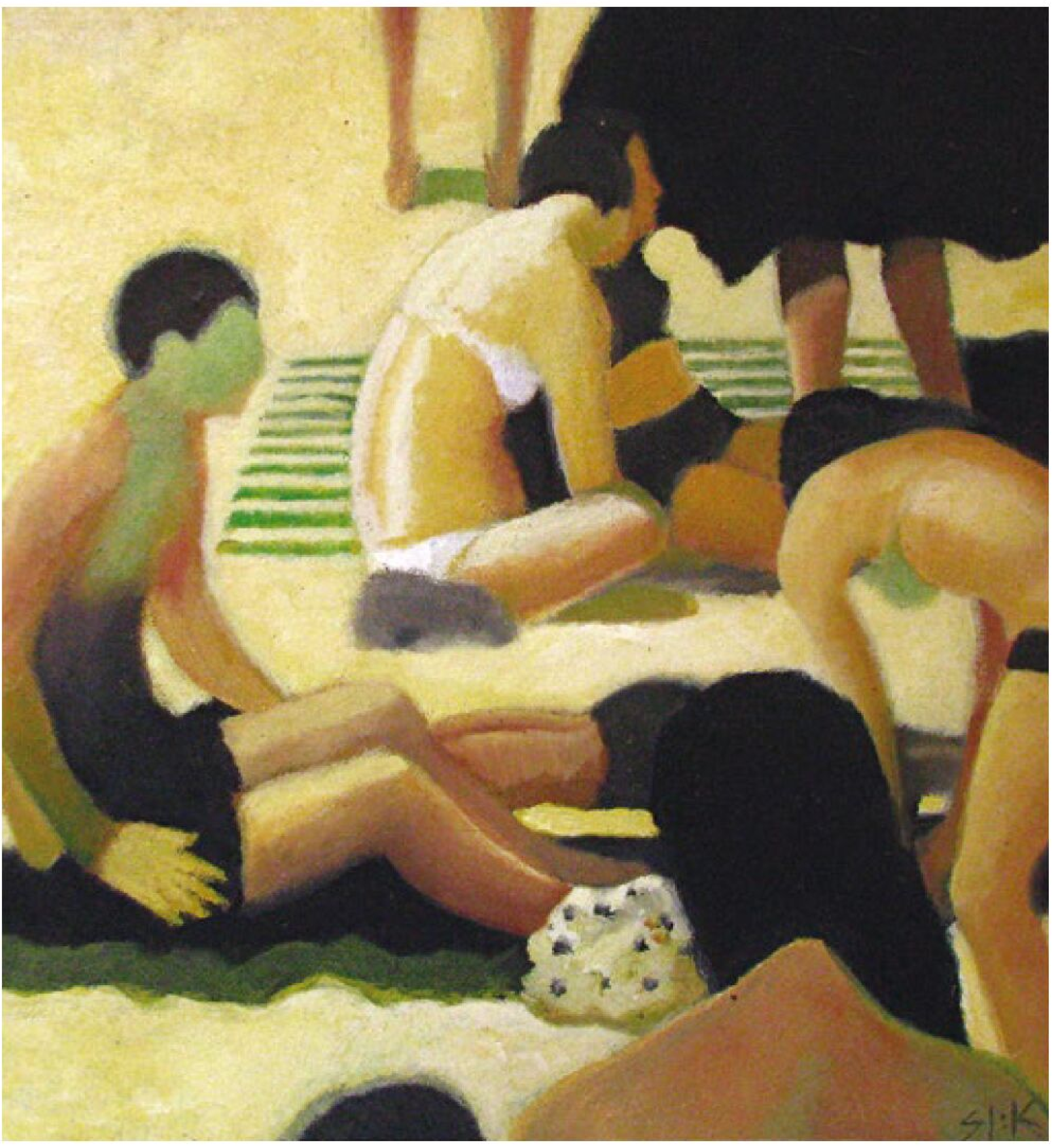
Opposite page –
Top: Beach Group
Below: Beach Figure Study.

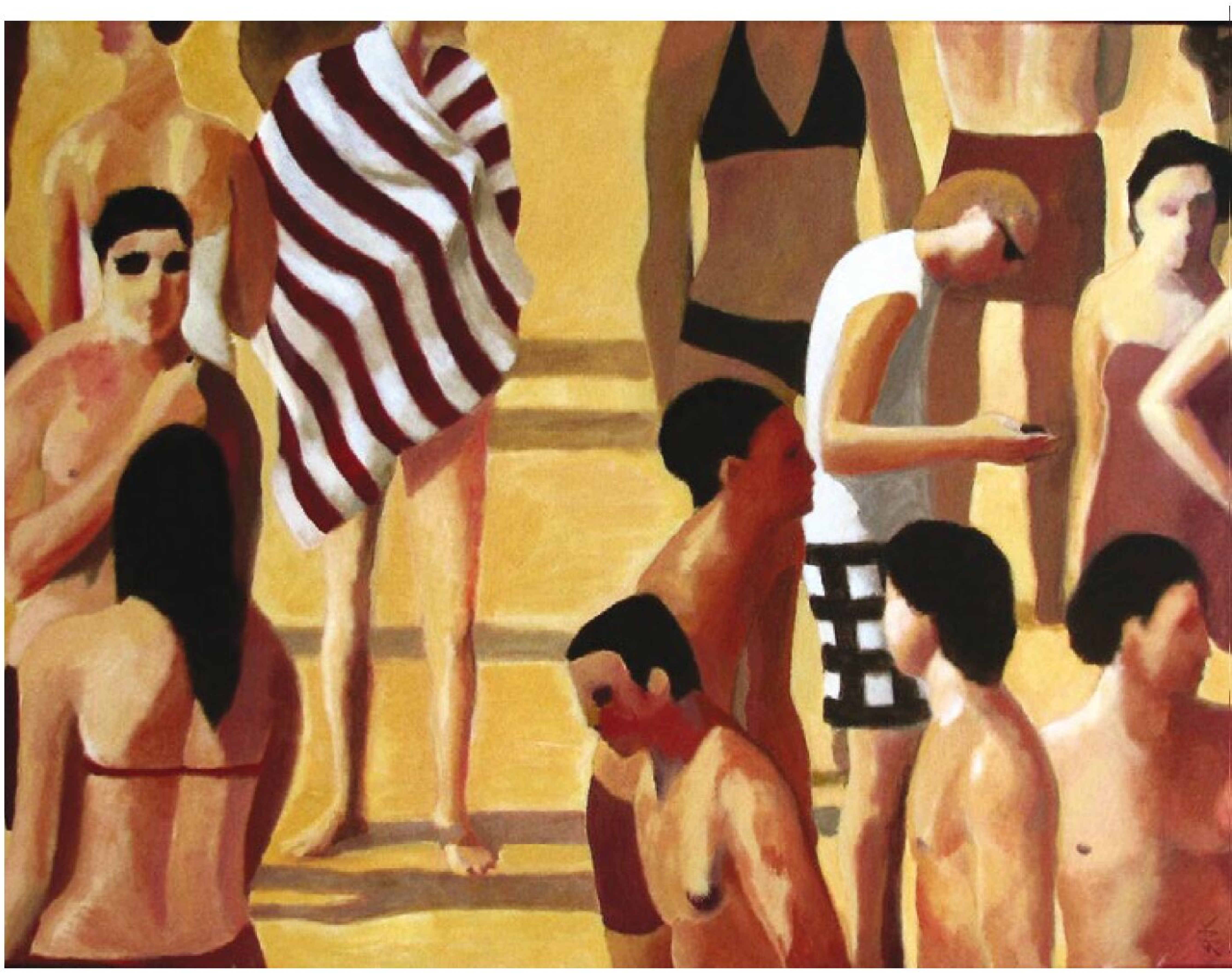
from different view points, and close-ups, are more interesting to me than general scenes.

With many beach paintings I like to paint a canvas black first – and then paint bright colour over the black, using the depth of the dark ground to give weight to the elements of the picture. This way, highlights of colour and light are quickly visible and dynamic. A painting can have an immediacy in its nature, or it can be worked more slowly … applying the colour layer by layer.

I like both oils and acrylics and I am happy to try using other materials and techniques for different subjects and effects.

Working in my studio is a daily





routine. I must do it to stay sane. I have a short attention span and lots of time on my hands, so I must keep on with the pursuit of 'The Mystery'. All artists understand this because we have been born with an urge to create things – images – visual lovelies that make us feel good. When we work we hope to discover new richness within us; riches of creativity that make our existence worthwhile. 'The Mystery' is our potential to make real whatever is deeply embedded in our minds – or concepts from the ether – in a million different ways. It's an inexhaustible fund of fun, challenge, defeat, exhilaration, fatigue, devotedness, and exploration.

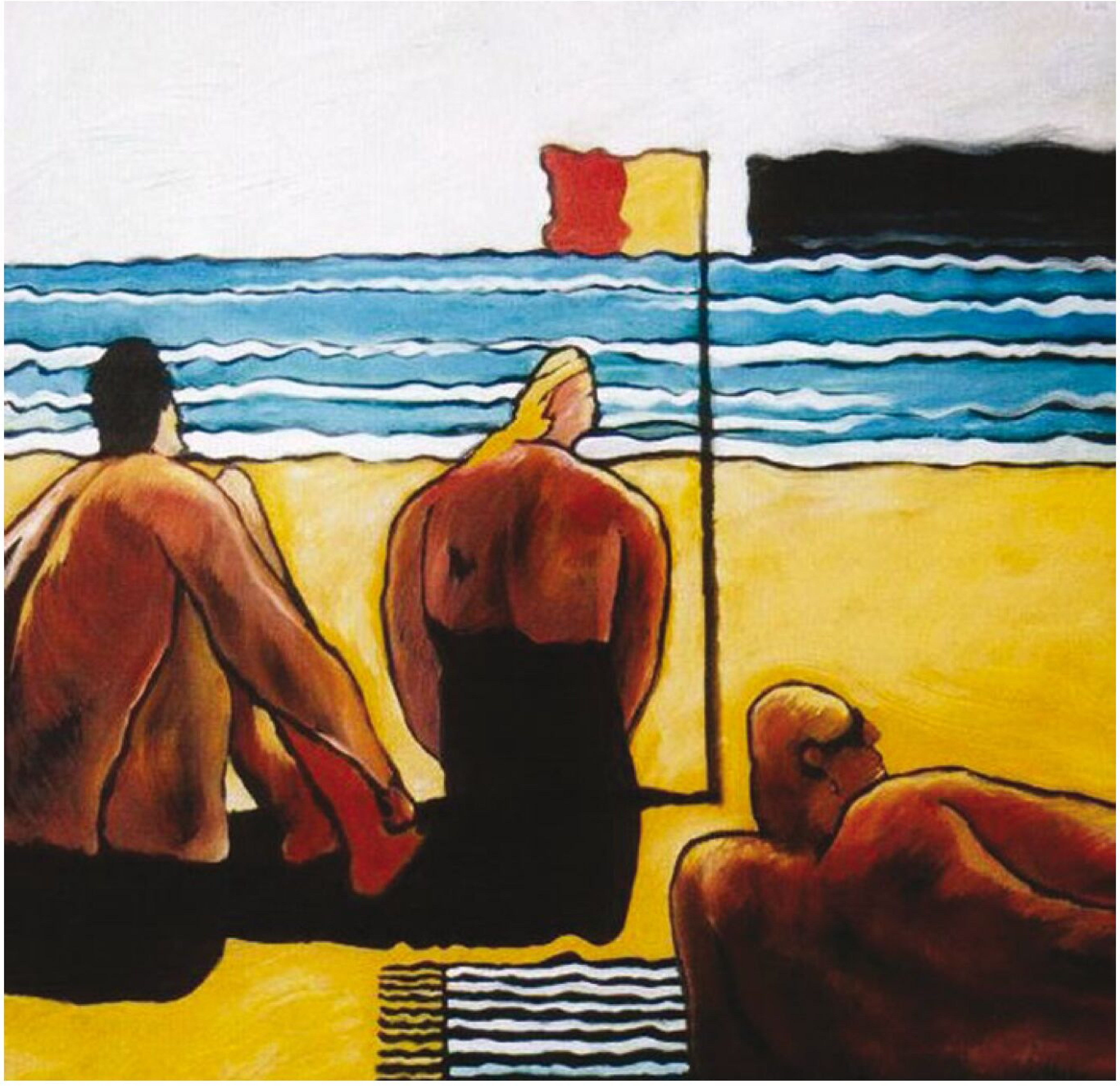
I teach private art lessons in clay sculpture, pottery, painting and drawing; and I welcome my guest students into our home-stay artistic retreat: Fired Art Retreat. My partner grows healthy organic vegetables from our garden and I cook meals to suit our guests. It works well. I have enjoyed an interesting few years of working with people from all walks of life and from many countries, learning how to tap into their artistic abilities.

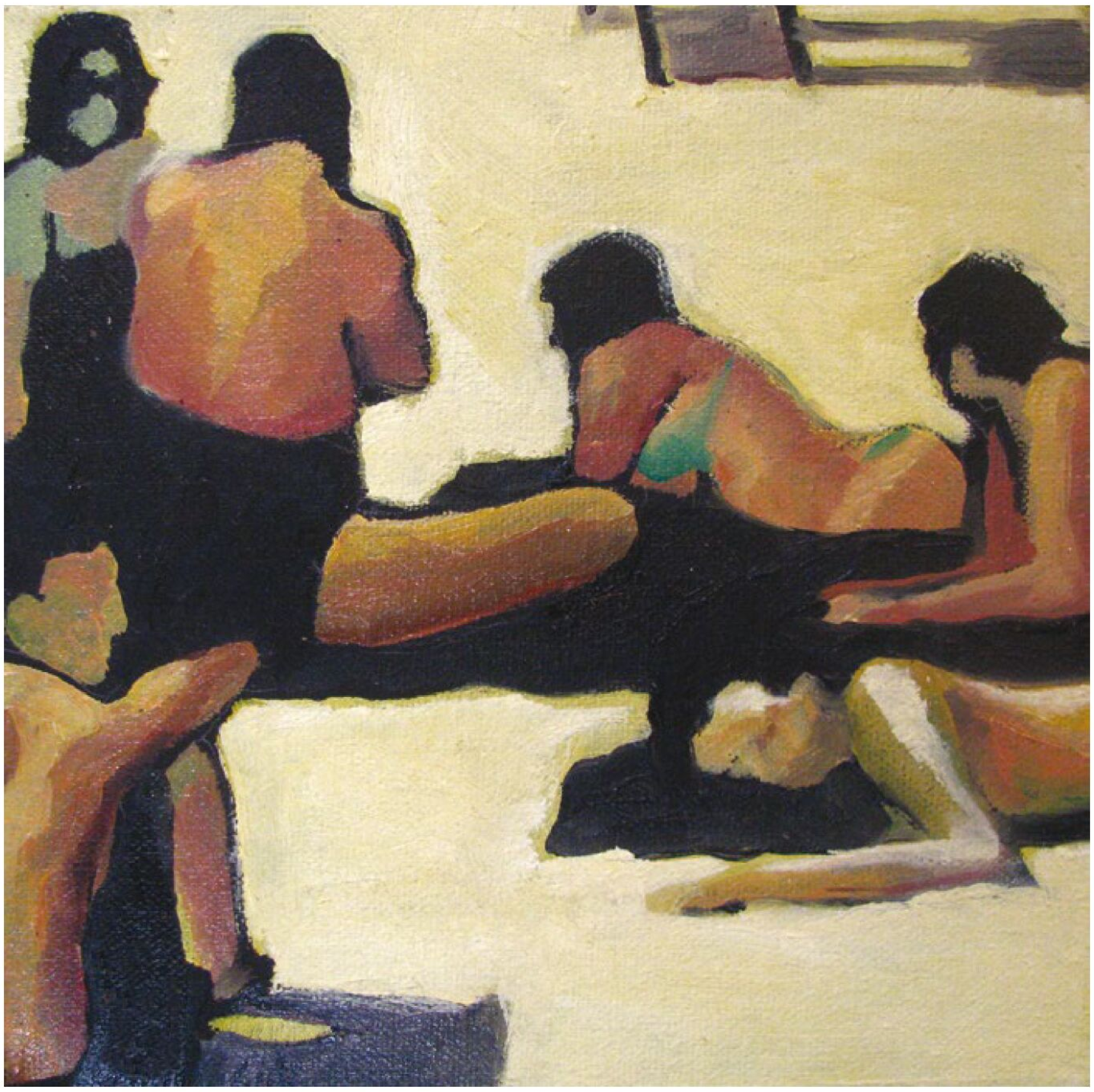
It is a self indulgent, seemingly indolent life – but when I review the work accomplished through the years, I see the evolution of my eye and where I am now … compared to the earlier times.

It's a long, long journey to unpack 'The Mystery'.

Maybe one day I will get to the bottom of it. I hope not.

Detailed information about Sally Hook's beautiful Fired Art Gallery and Retreat near Nambucca Heads can be found on the website: www.ozmosis.net.au





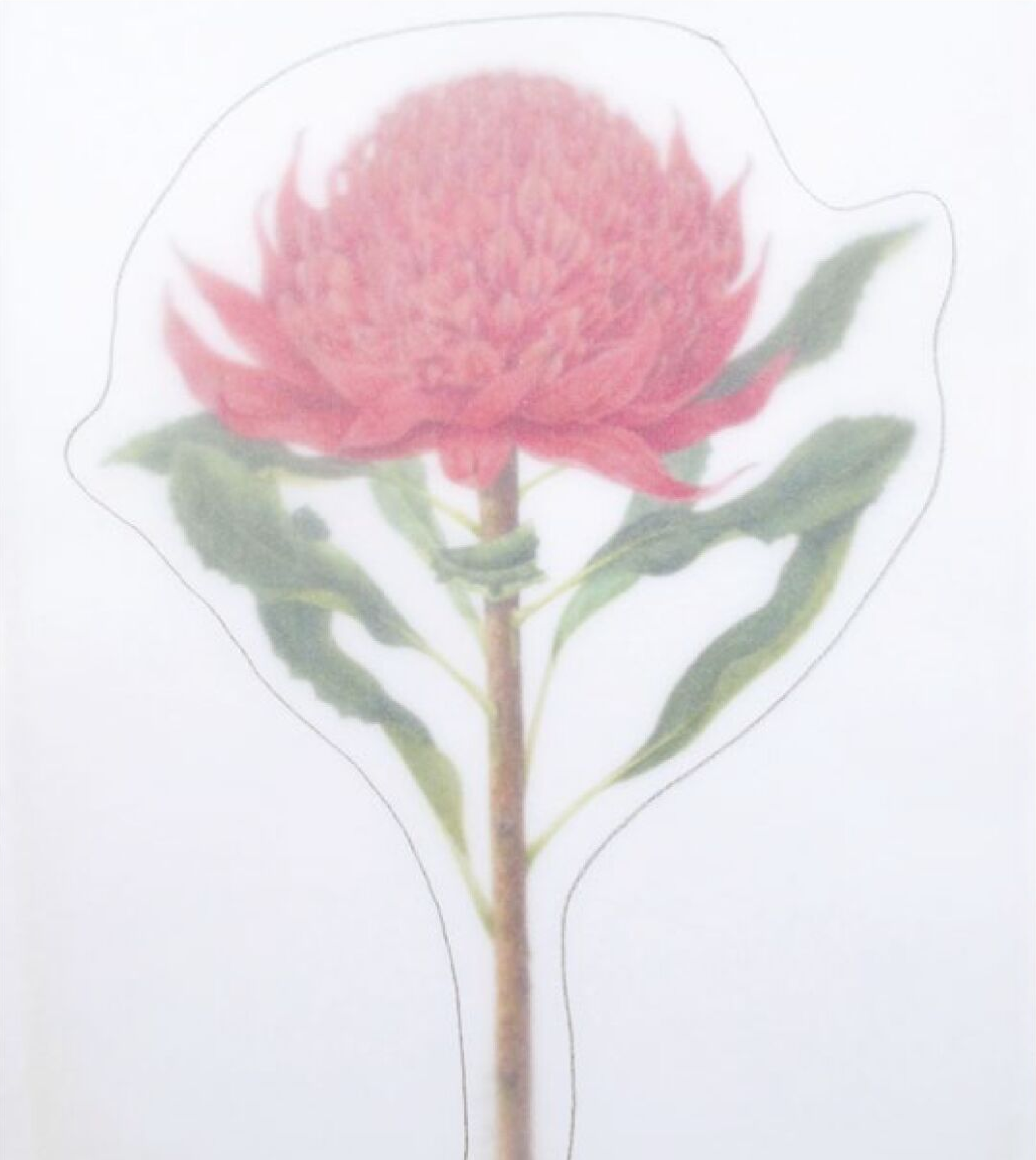
Detailed Subjects on White Background

with Leonie Norton

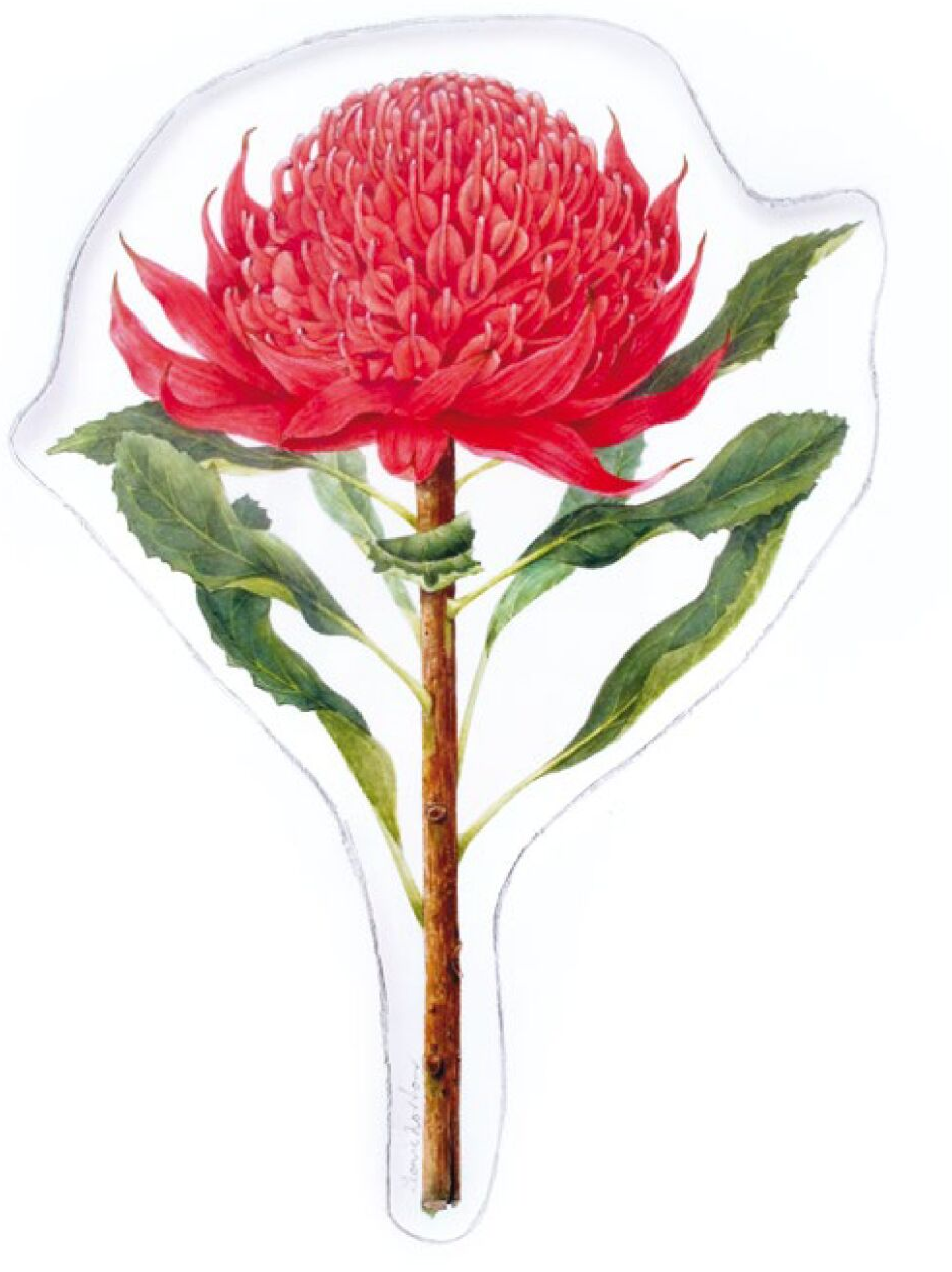
If you are painting a botanical art or natural history subject on a white background, ensure your work is protected at all times. Oils from your hand can leave greasy marks on the watercolour paper which are impossible to remove as they are absorbed into the paper.

Protection will also prevent unwanted paint spots, splatters or dropped brushes from damaging your work. Simply use clear baking paper or a larger piece of tracing paper that will fit around your work. These papers are transparent and will also allow the hand to glide across the paper and not stick.

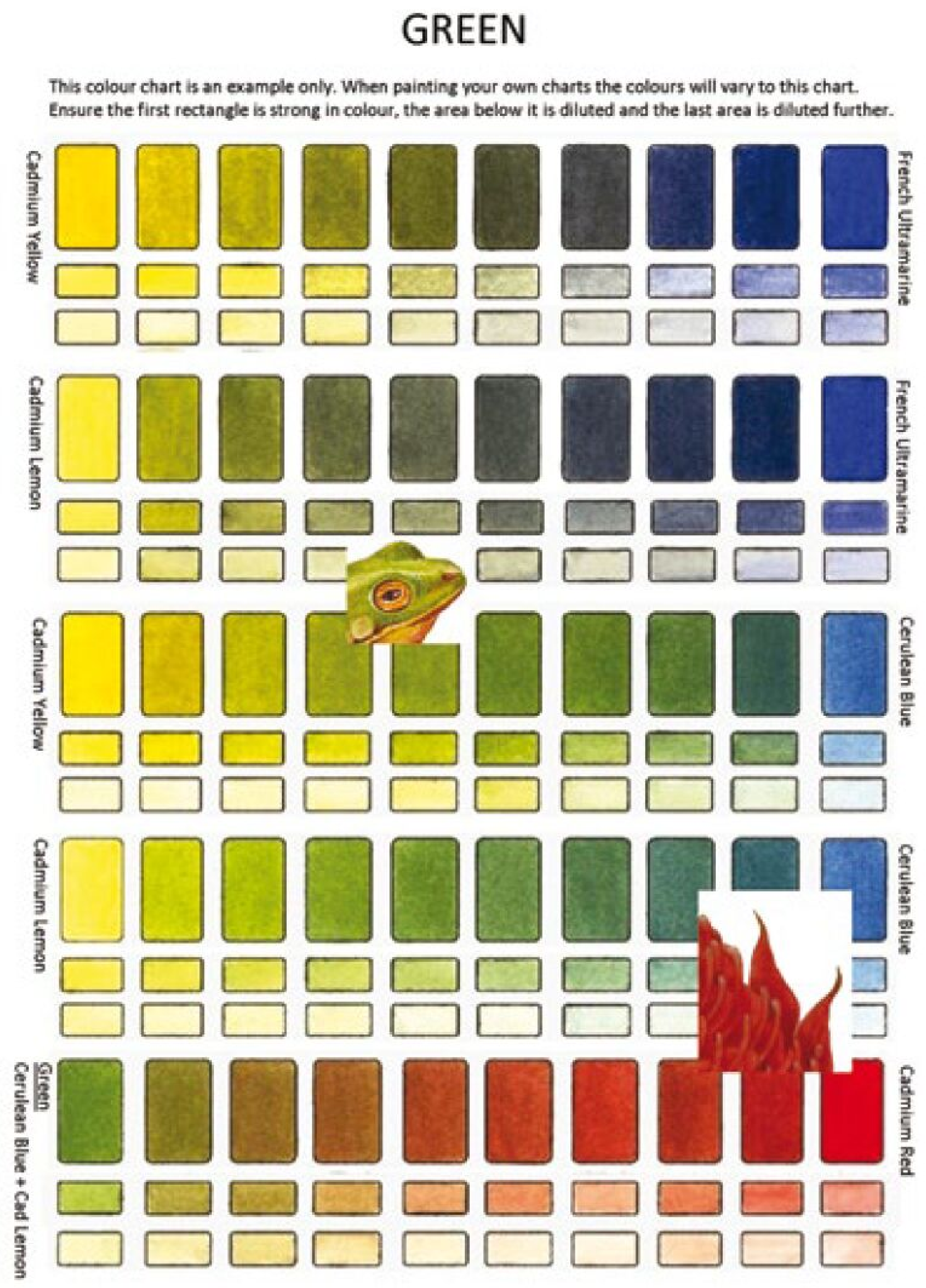
Bend the edges of the protective paper over the top and bottom of the watercolour paper and tape at the rear. Draw a line around the area of your graphite drawing which will be on the watercolour paper. Cut out this section. The only area exposed



Below left: Cover painting with baking paper and draw around subject



Below right: Cut out around painting.



Above left: Example of a green colour chart with subjects indicating paint colour matches

Above right: Colour matching Agave attenuata

will be where you are painting.

Initially you will have completed a tonal drawing of your subject, which enables you to determine where the shadows and highlights will be on your painting.

Colour Matching

An accurate method is to paint your own colour charts. Working with a limited palette, use 3 warm colours and 3 cool colours to produce 450 colours. The warm colours are Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red and French Ultramarine. The cool colours are Cadmium Lemon, Permanent Rose and Cerulean Blue.

Painting the colour charts also helps with brush control, the amount of water to pigment required and the process of achieving smooth transparent washes. When painting in watercolour, many washes are applied to achieve intensity, rather than several thicker washes.

When mixing colour always begin with the lighter colour and add the darker colour to this. Use a small piece of watercolour paper to check the colour before applying it to the colour charts.

Notice each colour on the chart has three separate boxes. The first colour is the strongest, below that is a dilution and under that is a further dilution. These are all important when matching colours.

Check the colours by applying them to the edge of the same watercolour paper you are using for your painting. Hold the test piece against the subject.

The Colour Study

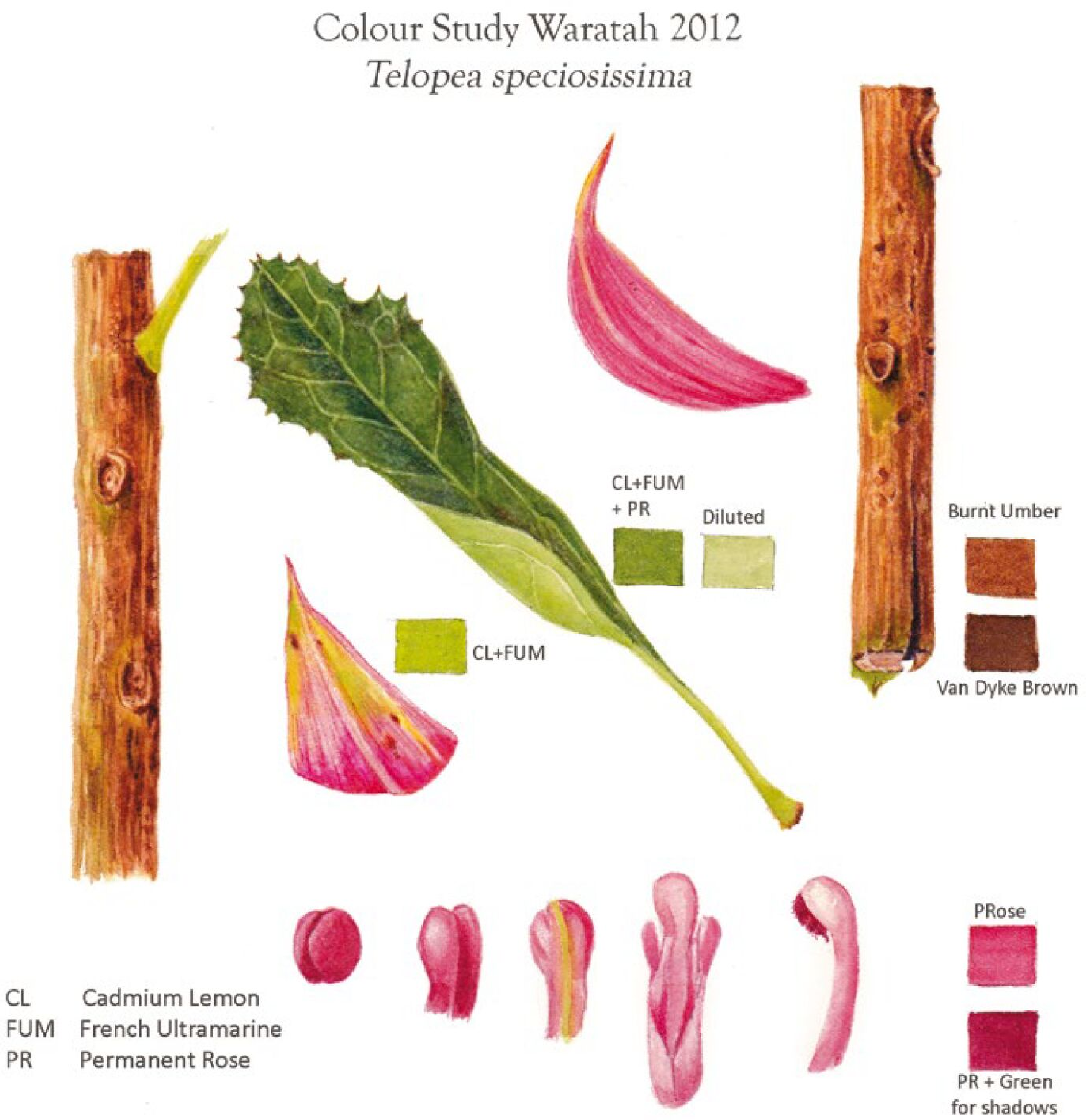
Before you begin painting you need to do a colour study of your subject. This entails accurate colour matching, and a "practice" of the various components in your work. Nothing should be left to chance. When you begin working on the final painting you will be confident in all aspects.

Record the colours used on the colour study and any other information that is important, such as the number of washes. This will make it easier to complete the final painting especially if you want to do it at a later date.

Limited Palette

Try to use two colours for your main mixture. A small amount only of another

When mixing colour always begin with the lighter colour and add the darker colour to this. Use a small piece of watercolour paper to check the colour before applying it to the colour charts.



colour can be added if necessary. If you use too many colours for the main colour it will be muddy and also difficult to rematch. Try to keep the colour clean. The Waratah colour study has used only 4 colours:- Burnt Umber, Van Dyke Brown (mixed from Burnt Umber + French Ultramarine), Permanent Rose and Cadmium Lemon. Experiment with colour mixing. Note there is also some Permanent Rose overglaze on the stem.

Watercolour Painting Techniques

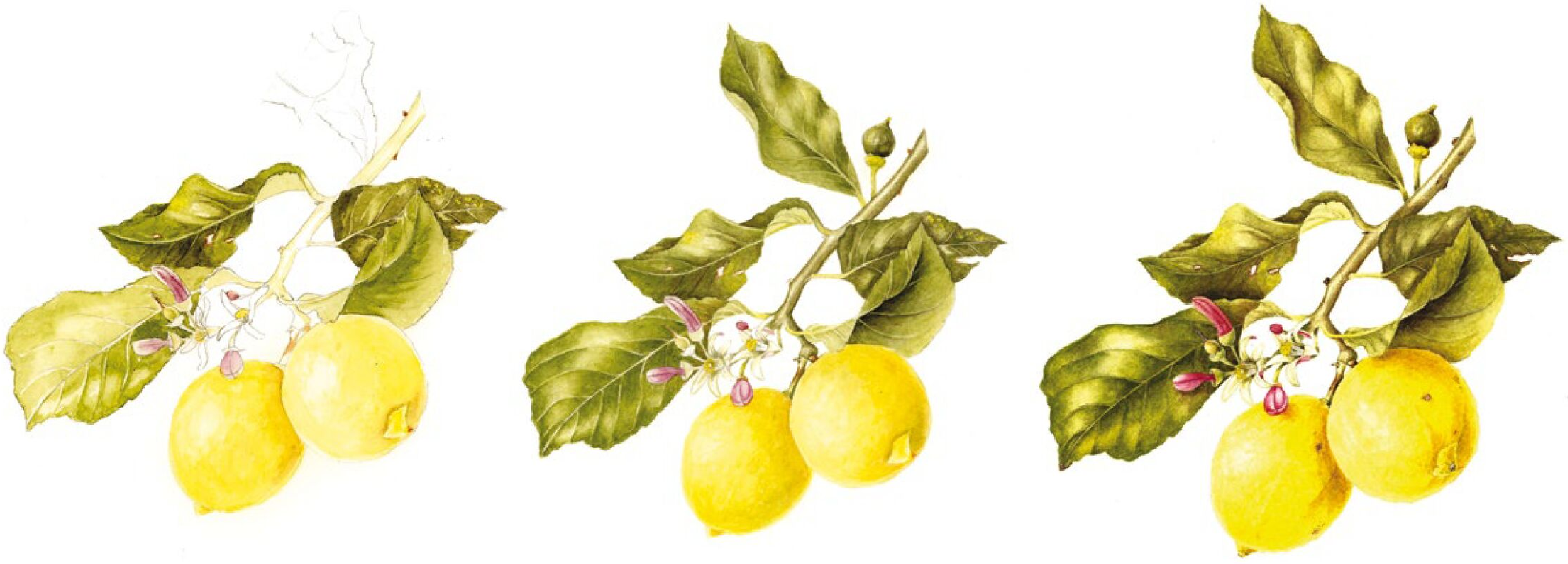
The larger the area to be painted, the larger the brush required. The area should be covered without redipping the brush in paint as this causes “tide” lines and streaky and uneven washes. A wash is simply a layer of watercolour paint. The intensity of the colour is built up by multiple washes.

Before applying the first diluted wash, dampen the watercolour paper slightly. This allows the paint to move smoothly over the paper. Load the brush by allowing it to absorb as much paint as possible. Remove excess paint from the brush on the side of the palette so the brush retains a point. Do not use plates to mix colour, as the diluted washes will run into one another. Use a palette with sections.

After you have matched the colour required, dilute this with water and that is your first wash. Do not paint one area at a time and finish it. Build up the washes of the various colours for each component at the same time. Continue until the colour intensity is right. There may be as many as six or seven washes, especially with darker colours.

Above left and Right: Third rule
Right: One point perspective

Opposite page:
Top: Perspective in clouds
Middle: Perspective inthe landscape
Bottom: Perspective, composition and focal areas

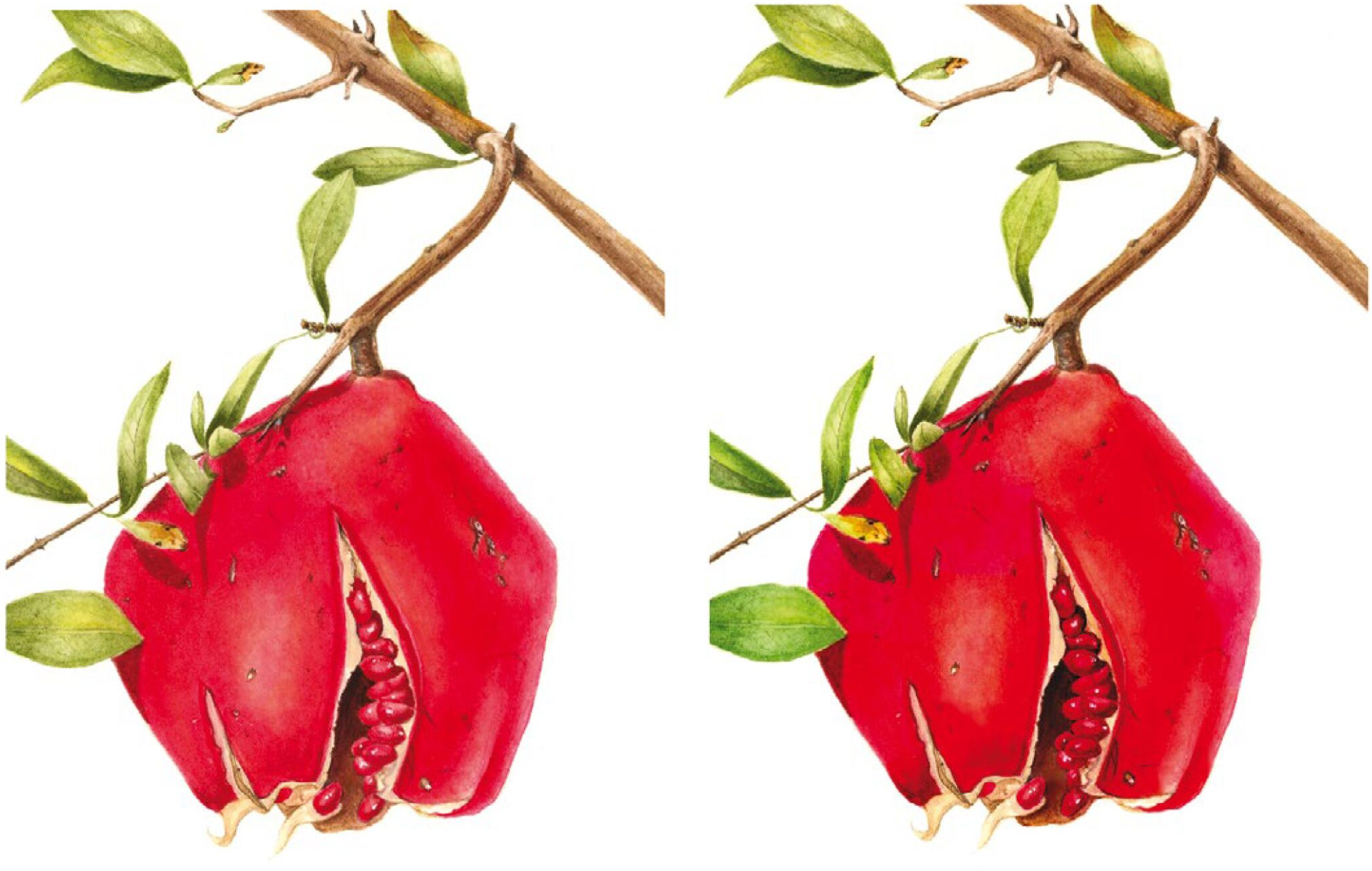


Above: Example of paint application for washes

Overglazing

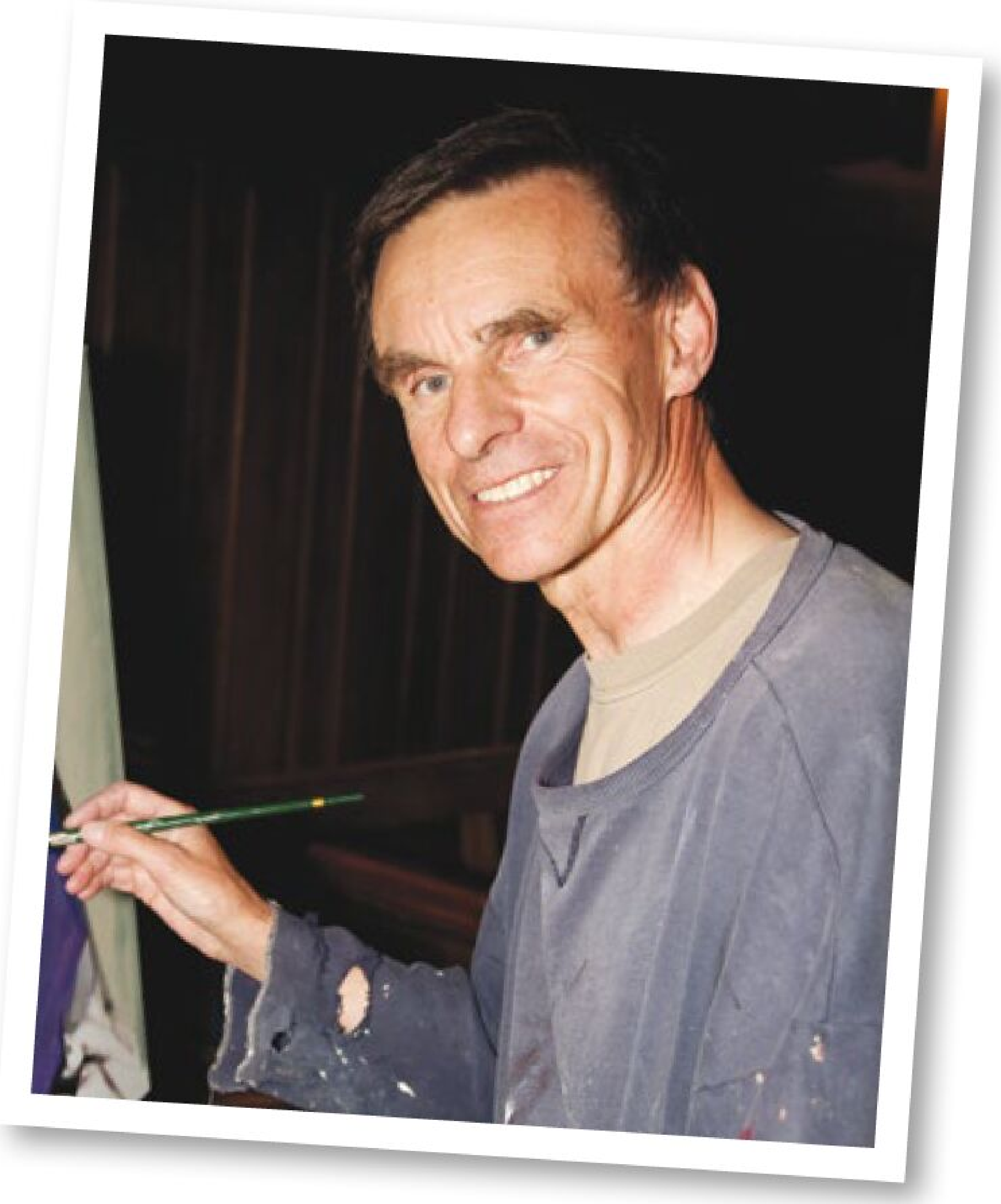
Overglazing is used to boost the colour intensity and add a glow to your subject. If you have (for example), a subject that is red and you want to add further interest, intensity and glow to the colour, apply a transparent diluted lemon or yellow wash to certain areas, allowing the red to shine through the yellow overglaze. Below is an example of a pomegranate with overglazing.

Painting fine detail and realistic subjects requires Practice, Patience, Perseverance and Experimentation. The more you practice the more skilled you will become and the more confidence you will gain.



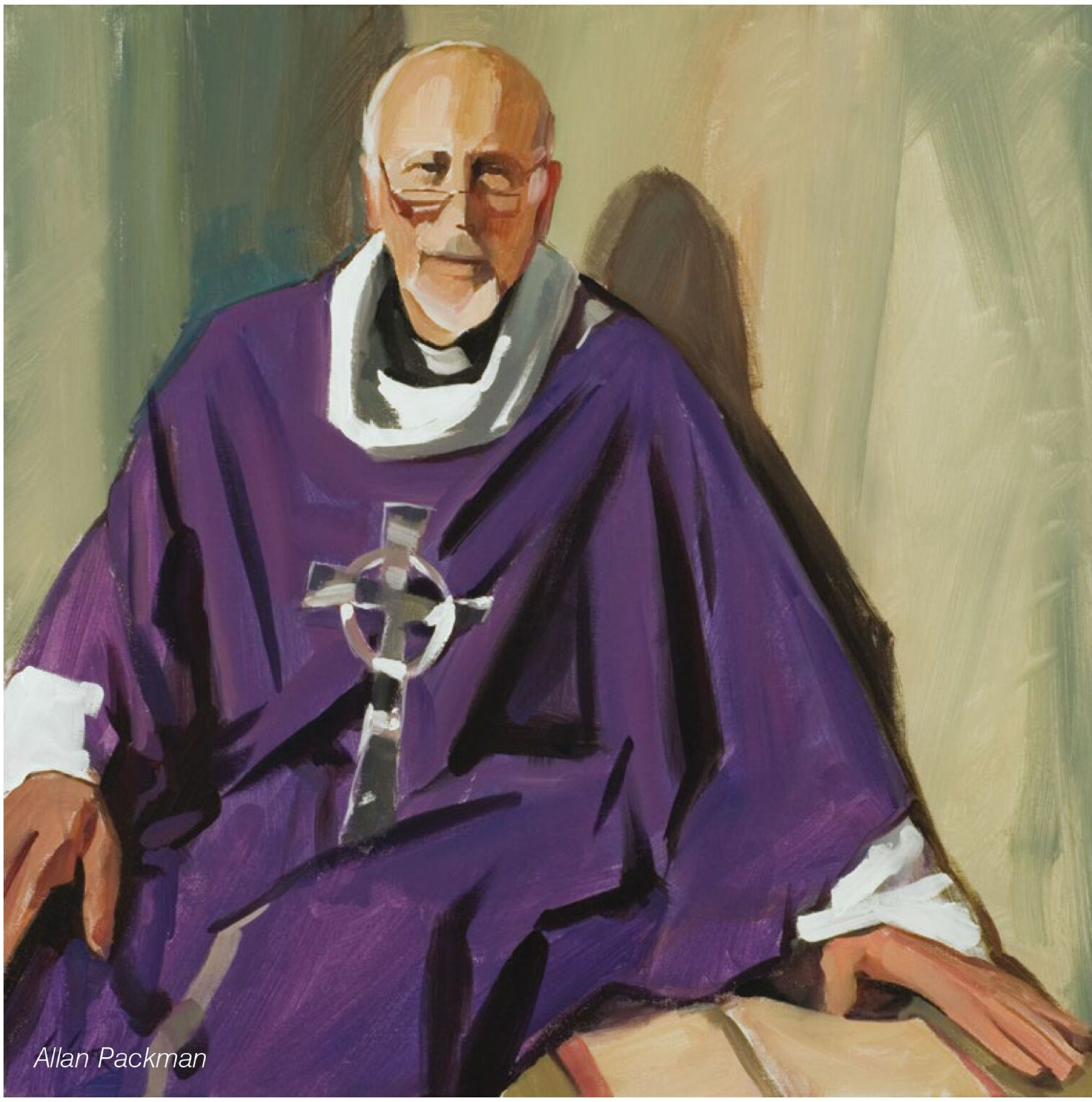
Below: The initial painting Both Permanent Rose and Lemon added for a glow. Transparent Overglazing was also applied to several leaves.

Depicting People

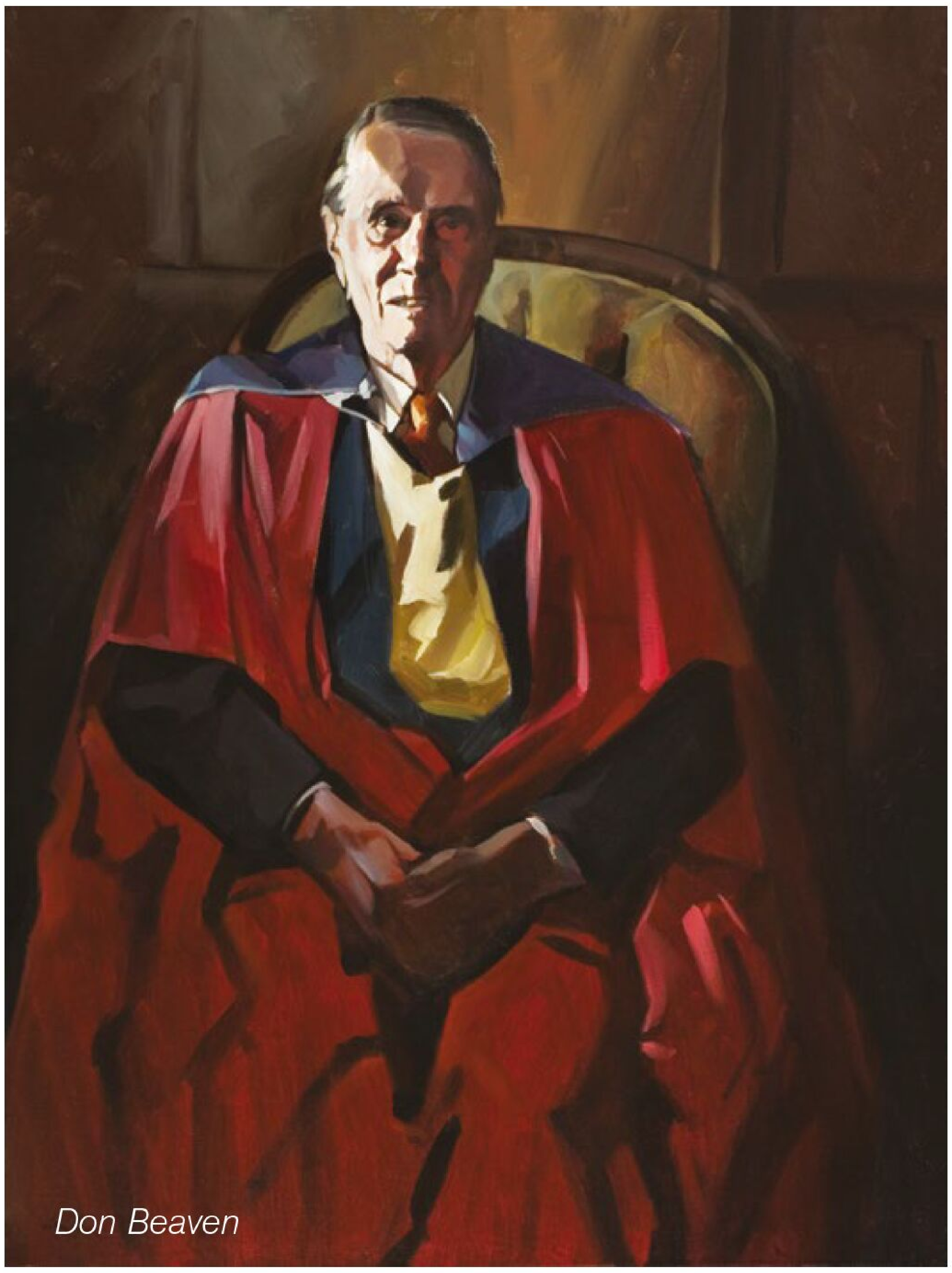


Contributed by John Gillies

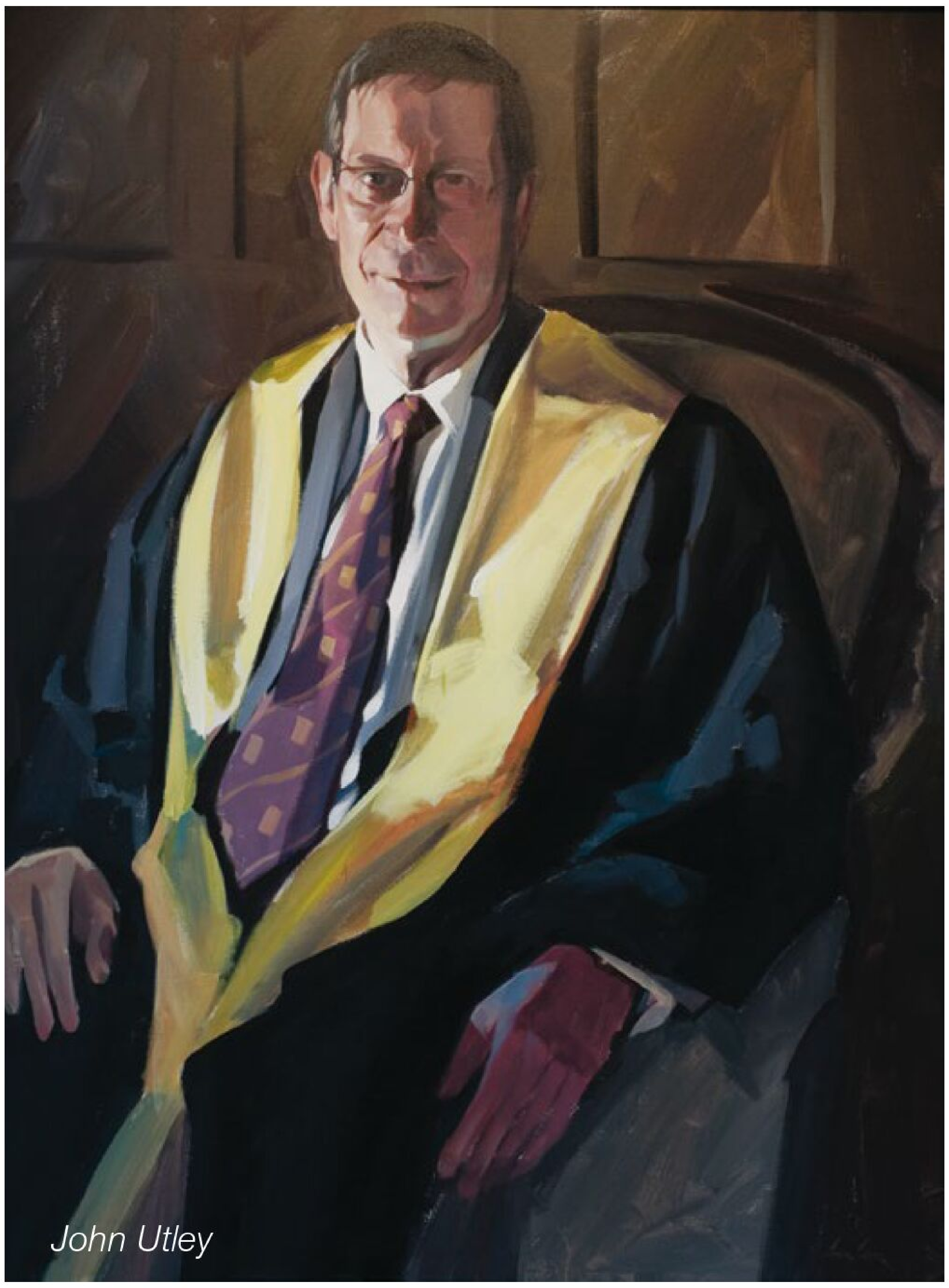
Most artists can identify various steps in the production of a particular artwork – although the emphasis on each step may differ from artist to artist. When it comes to portraiture, this New Zealand artist recognises his own meticulous process.



Allan Packman



Don Beaven



John Utley

THE PRELIMINARIES

I first decide what it is I am attempting to achieve. I need to interview the subject and decide what characteristics of the subject I wish to express. I need to consider the attitude/disposition, facial features, clothing/uniform; and the social, professional or sporting context; and perhaps where the finished work is likely to be displayed.

I next decide where the painting will be carried out. This may vary from studio to home or even an outdoor environment. Recently, I was asked to paint a portrait of a TV personality during a live national TV broadcast … something which some might find to be a rather disturbing intrusion!

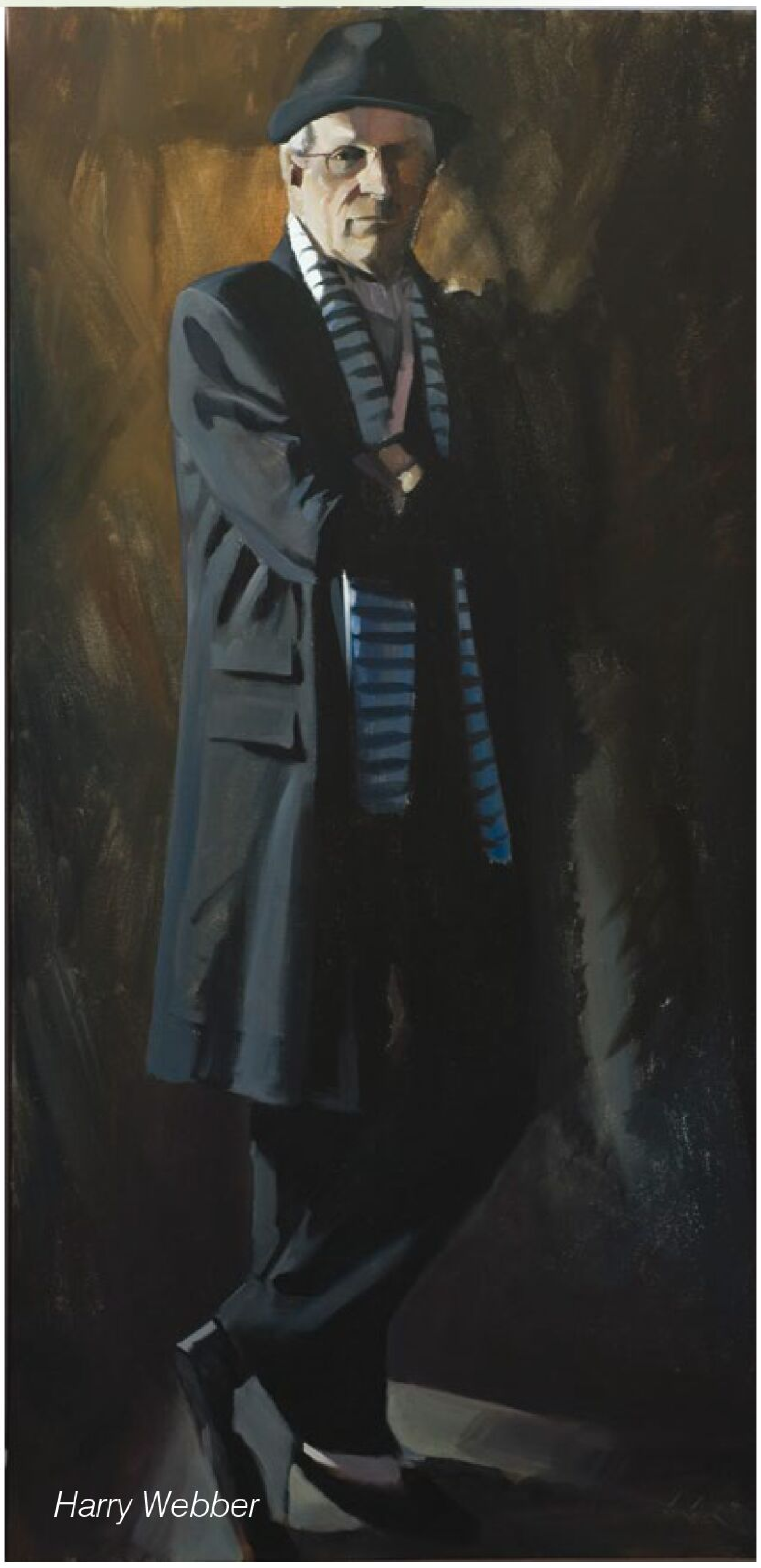
The selection of the medium is important. The choice of oils, acrylics, pastels or watercolours is something often predetermined – although my choice frequently relates to the time that the sitter has available. Whether one uses canvas, board or paper is largely determined by the choice of medium.

Another vital consideration is the time factor. Rarely are sitters prepared to give more than one or two sittings of two hours each. For this reason, I tend to favour the use of acrylics; and I will often take photographs in order to complete details such as clothing and medals.

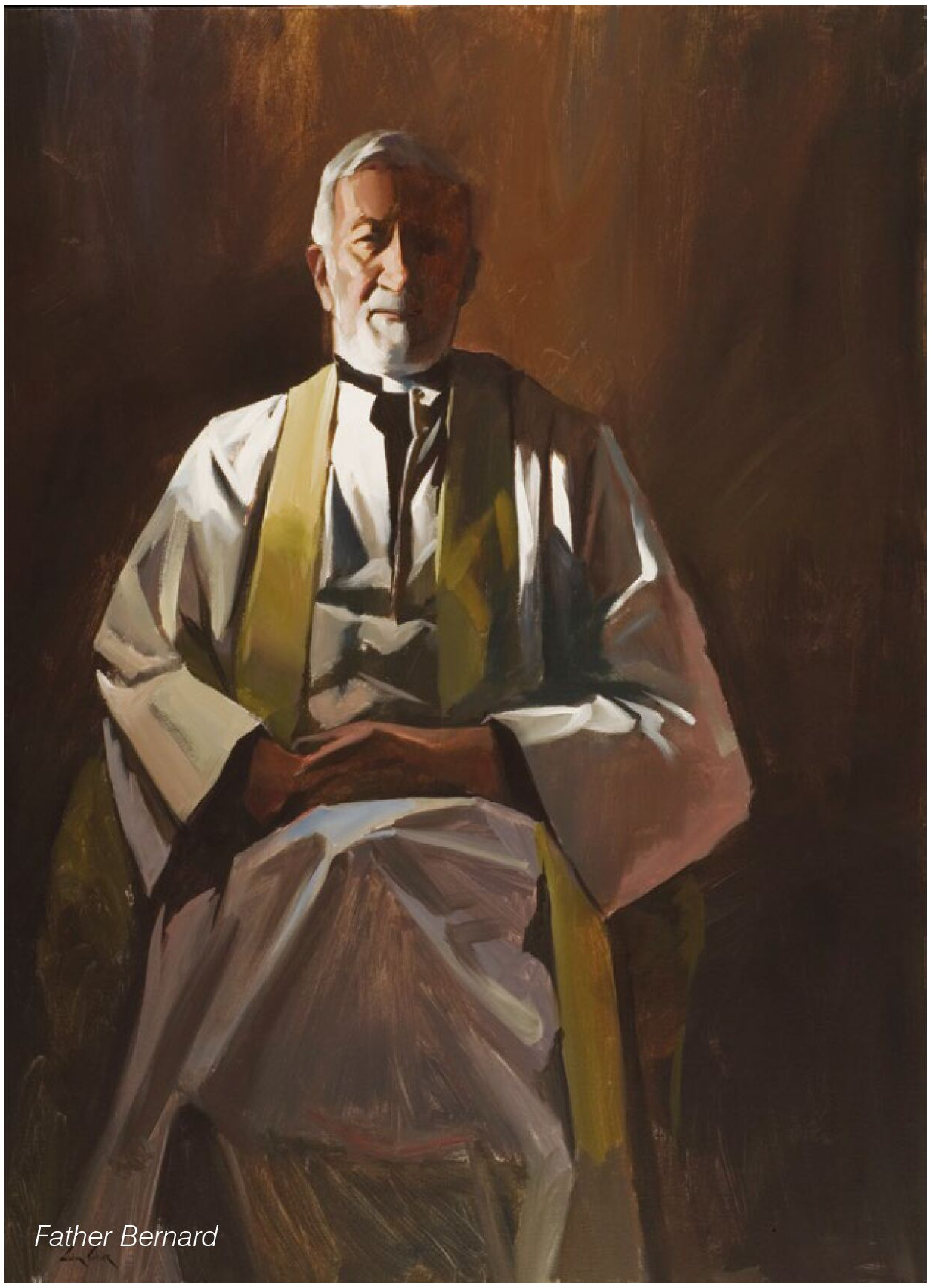
> “I see my art as a celebration of the beauty of my environment and, at times, of man’s intrusion into it.”

PREPARATION OF THE SUBJECT

This is an important step because a badly staged portrait will cause endless frustration to the artist and is likely to disappoint the recipient. Consideration must be given to lighting, and hence to the drama of presentation. Posture, clothing and extras (such as hand-held objects and items of furniture) also need to be considered.



Harry Webber



Father Bernard

> "At times, the portrait painter can find himself in a difficult position as the freedom of creativity and self expression can be compromised by the demands of the patron's contract."

THE PAINTING PROCESS

Most painters are familiar with these steps.

I create a rough outline. I use a wash of Burnt Umber and white, making sure that I am happy with the overall proportions outlined.

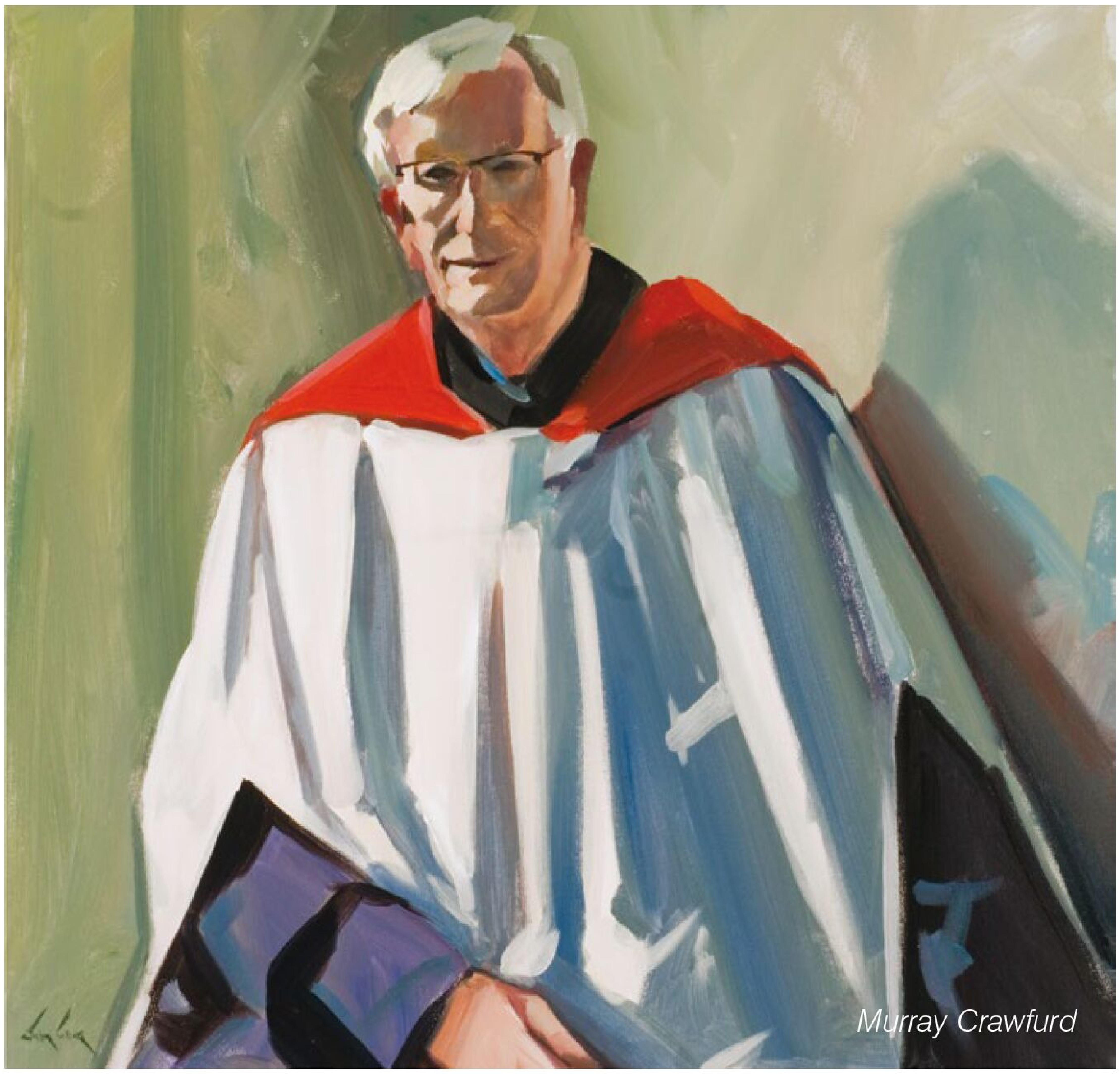
While many portrait painters leave the background to last, I consider that it is vital to achieving what I call a 'colour pace' for the painting. In other words, it will dictate what I do to the rest of the work. I tend to use dark colours from my palette of black, white, primary blue, French Ultramarine, primary yellow, primary red and Cadmium Red Dark.

When dealing with the body and clothing, I paint the principle facial features first and then move to the neck, hands and feet (as necessary).

Lastly, I paint the details. Often the paint already applied has had a chance to dry, and I want the details to be definite. I also want the detail work to display confident brush strokes.

THE CRITICAL REVIEW

Before submission of the completed work, I decide whether I have achieved my goal with respect to my original intention. This can be a hard step because often one is tired after such hard concentrated work and it can seem a bit dispiriting to have to alter the work. At times I seduce myself into believing that 'the mouth is okay' when clearly it is not! Perhaps some would contend that this is the price I am paying for being a 'slave to convention' and I would

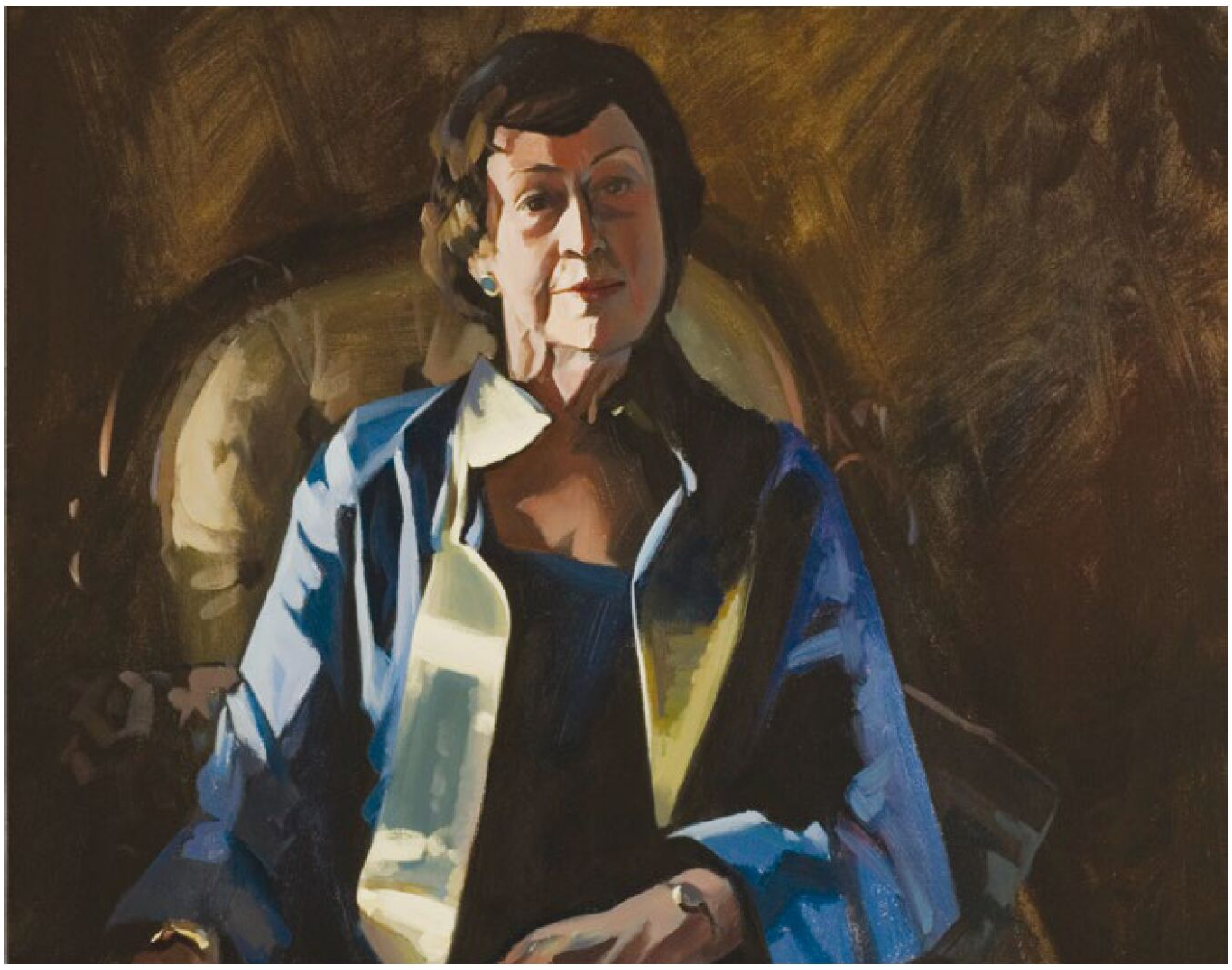


Murray Crawfurd

be better off to accept what I have done as part of the immediacy of the artistic encounter. I guess, in the end, it is the artist who must decide.

THE OVERALL PROCESS

I suspect that my approach to painting is tempered by my life's experiences of having witnessed most forms of human suffering – from the mutilations of a war zone to the distress of patients with terminal illnesses. Therefore, I see my art as a celebration of the beauty of my environment and, at times, of man's intrusion into it. Although intellectual and emotional engagement are important ingredients



FOR YOUR INFO

About the Author

John Gillies was born in Christchurch, New Zealand. He was educated at St Andrew's College, Christchurch; and served with the Combined Services Medical Team and the First Australian Logistic Support Group in South Vietnam from December 1969 to February 1970. He graduated MB, ChB in 1971 and qualified Physician, FRACP in 1980. In 2007, he retired as Specialist Physician and Clinical Director of Respiratory Medicine for the Canterbury District Health Board – to become a full-time artist and portrait painter.

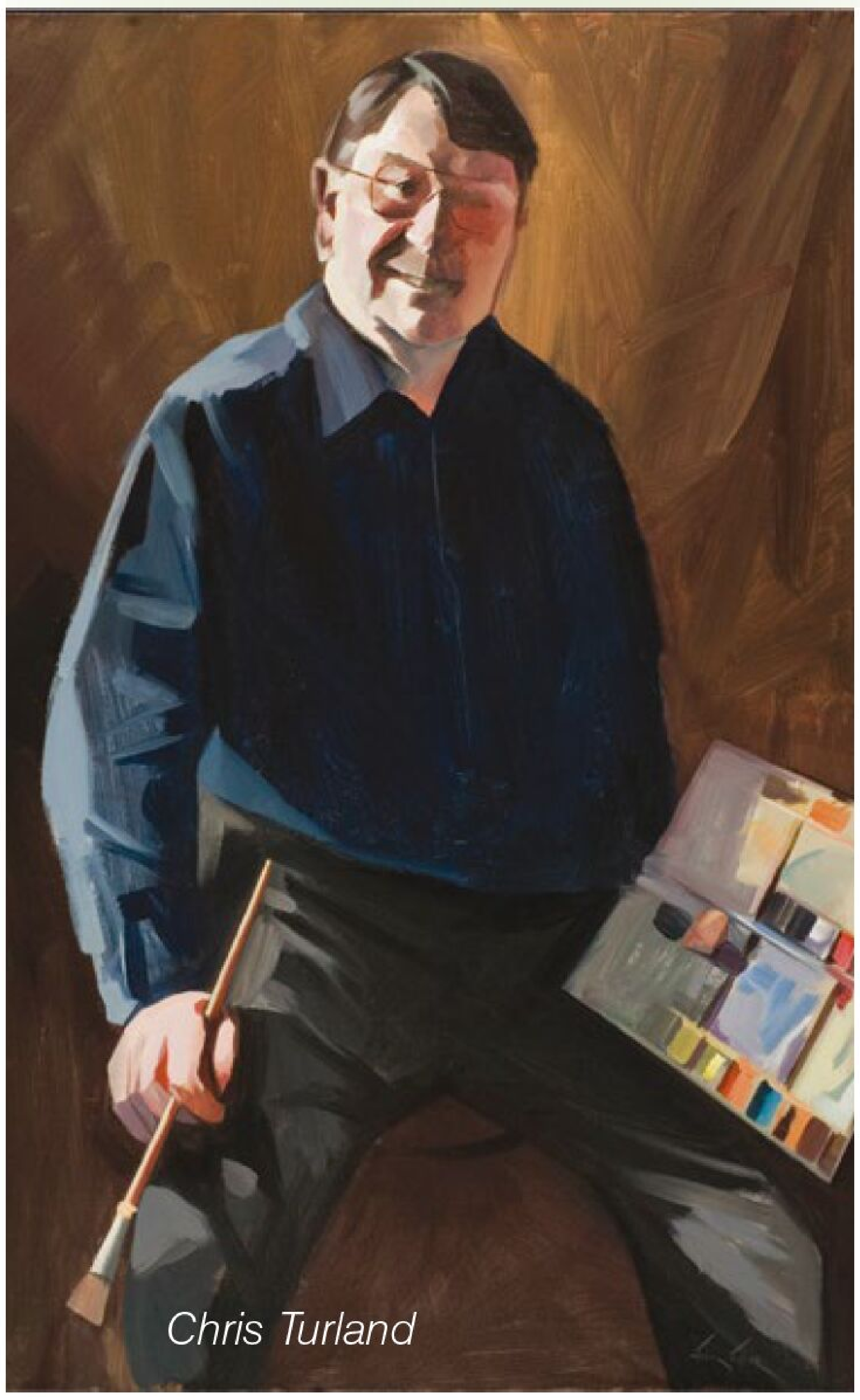
John studied figure drawing under sculptor Tom Taylor as a preparatory school student, and developed a special interest in portrait painting under Tom Field as a secondary school student. He studied human anatomy by cadaver dissection as a medical student at the Otago University Medical School in Dunedin, New Zealand.

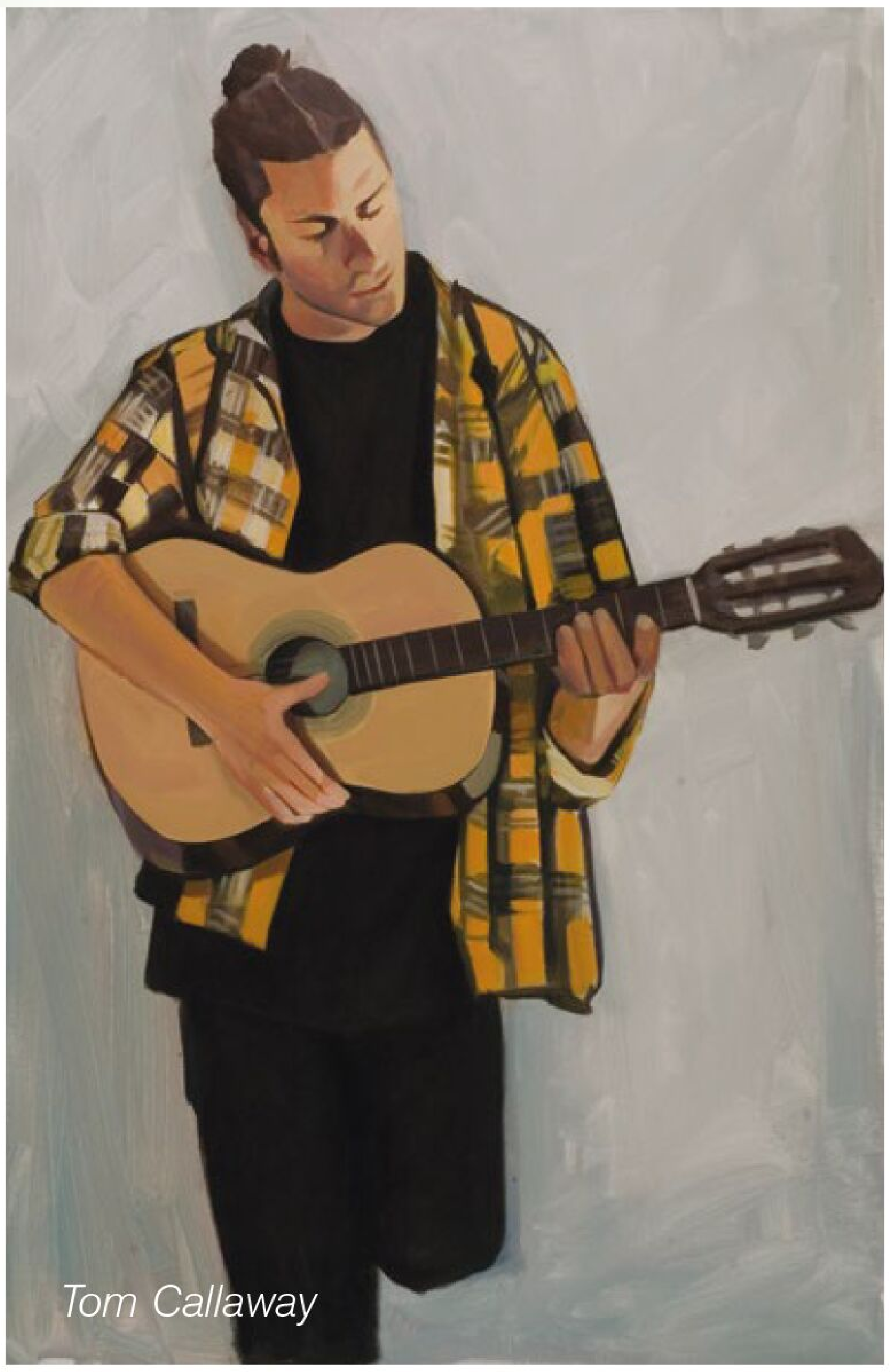
This artist's work has been widely exhibited. He supplies galleries including Merivale Fine Arts in Christchurch, Novo Gallery in Dunedin, Saffron Gallery in Timaru, and Rutherford Gallery in Nelson.

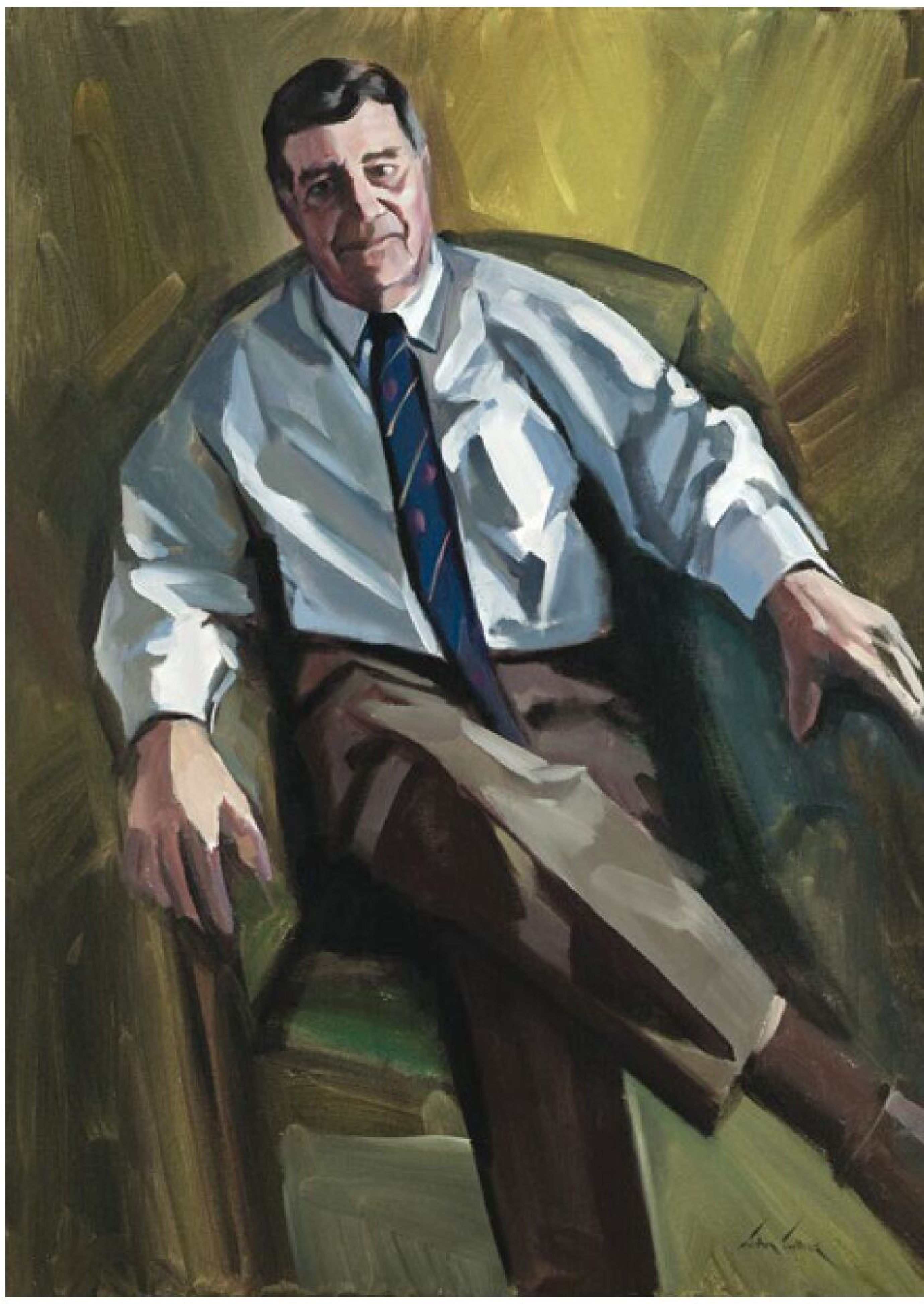
He has done portrait commissions for Arthur Barnett's (Dunedin), University of Otago Medical School (Dunedin), St Andrew's College (Christchurch), The Christchurch Hospital, The Princess Margaret Hospital (Christchurch), The Christchurch Clinical School of Medicine, and The Isaac Theatre Royal Trust.

In 2008, the artist published the book 'In My Chair' – a collection of 60 portraits of prominent Cantabrians, featuring biographies by David McPhail and an introduction by David McPhail and Jon Gadsby. He also published a CD calendar for 2010 – featuring scenes of Canterbury cricket.

He has received awards including the Telecom Art Award, highly commended, in 1992; the New Zealand Wearable Art Award, creative excellence, in 1998; and the Montana World of Wearable Art Award, section winner, in 2005.


Chris Turland


Tom Callaway



> “My advice to developing artists is to be true to yourself and always keep an open mind about matters creative.”

in art, primarily I do not set out to achieve these … although I certainly would not like to produce work considered creatively extinct!

Most artists identify with at least one or more past Masters. I have been an enthusiastic follower of the society portraitist John Singer Sargent (1856-1925). I consider that his drama of presentation and the confidence of his brush strokes makes him second to none. However, although his dictum was ‘quick and accurate’, I note that he required 30 to 40 sittings to complete his larger works.

At times, the portrait painter can find himself in a difficult position as the freedom of creativity and self expression can be compromised by the demands of the patron’s contract. Some would argue that the portrait painter puts at risk the very sanctity of the creative process. Whereas I accept the creative limitations of convention, I feel that the energy and drive I put into my paintings makes the whole experience worthwhile – particularly if my end objectives are achieved.

Although I am passionate about portraiture, I also enjoy landscape painting and I recently developed a new style of painting with a palette knife which brings out the texture and form of the medium while at the same time preserving definition.

My most outstanding work was a portrait which was described as a work ‘which Sargent would have approved of’.

My worst disaster was a portrait when I broke my concentration after 12 hours of painting. I made a female TV presenter’s face too narrow (fortunately this was not broadcast on live TV). Another artistic disaster occurred when I was judge of an art competition and stepped back into a wax sculpture of hands – smashing them to bits – having just given the work second place!

My advice to developing artists is to be true to yourself and always keep an open mind about matters creative. My ultimate goal is to produce work combining outstanding technical skill and creative excellence … but to achieve all this in a fraction of the time required by Masters such as Sargent.

This portraitist’s email address is: johngillies@xtra.co.nz

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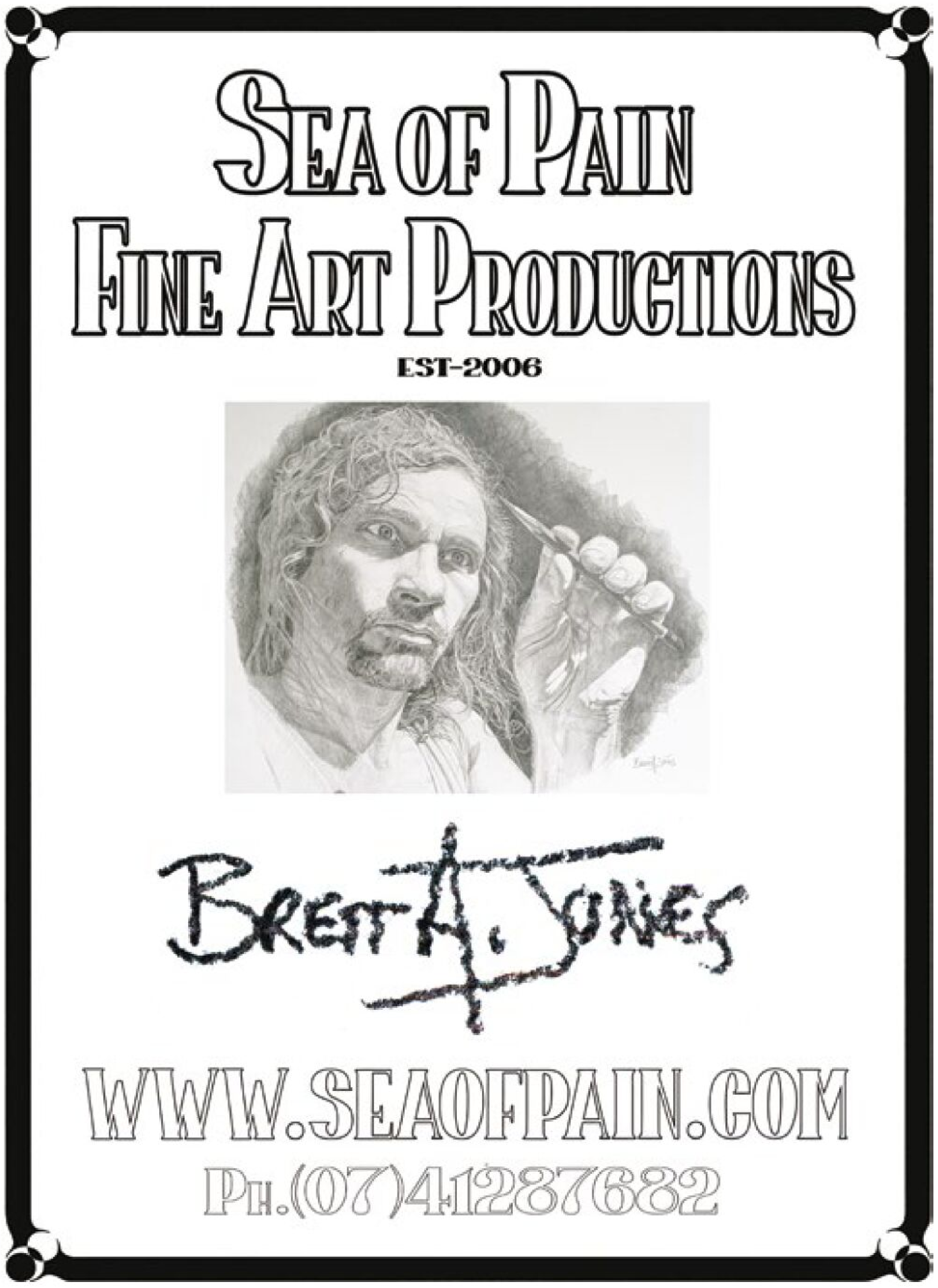

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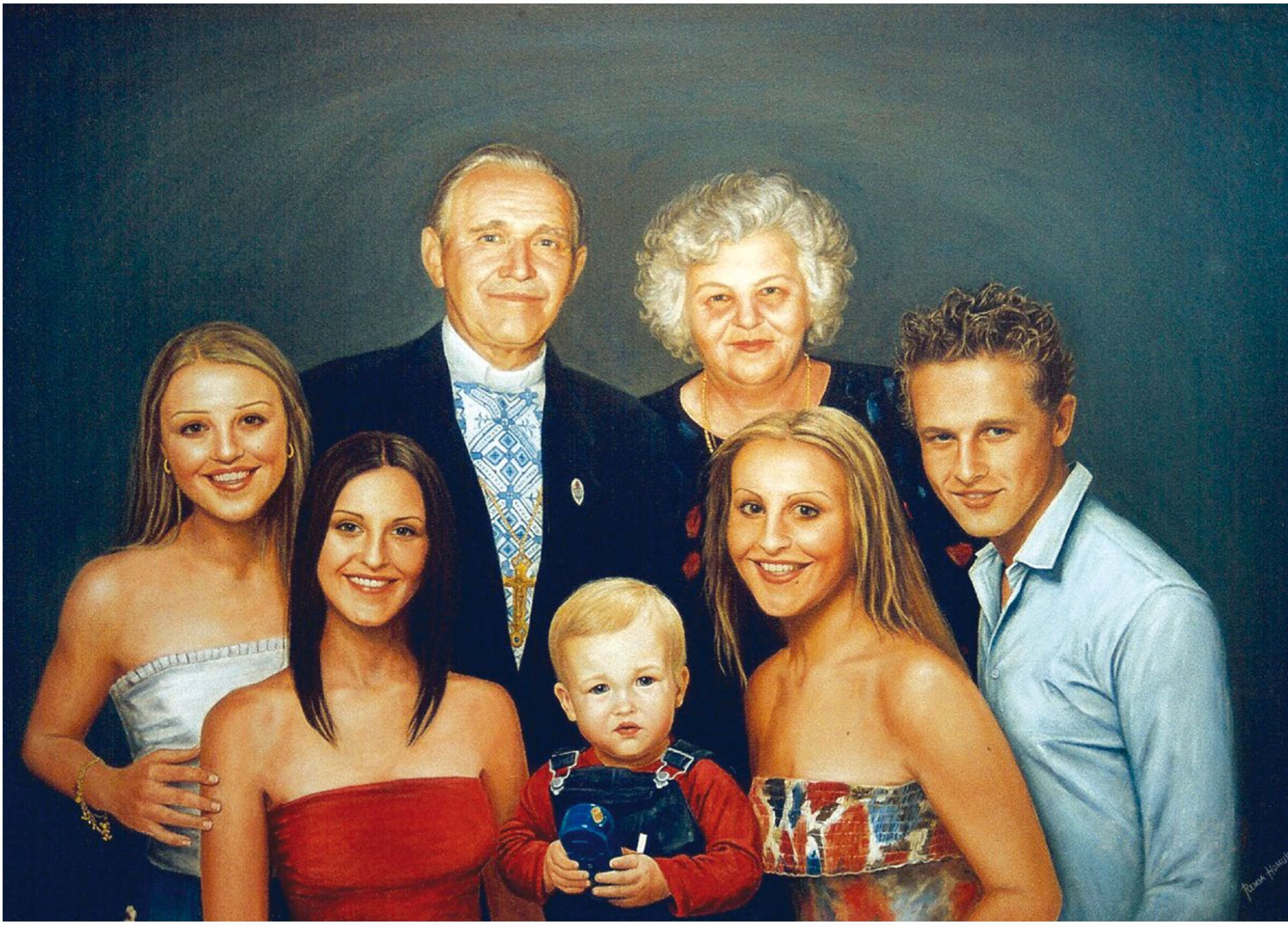
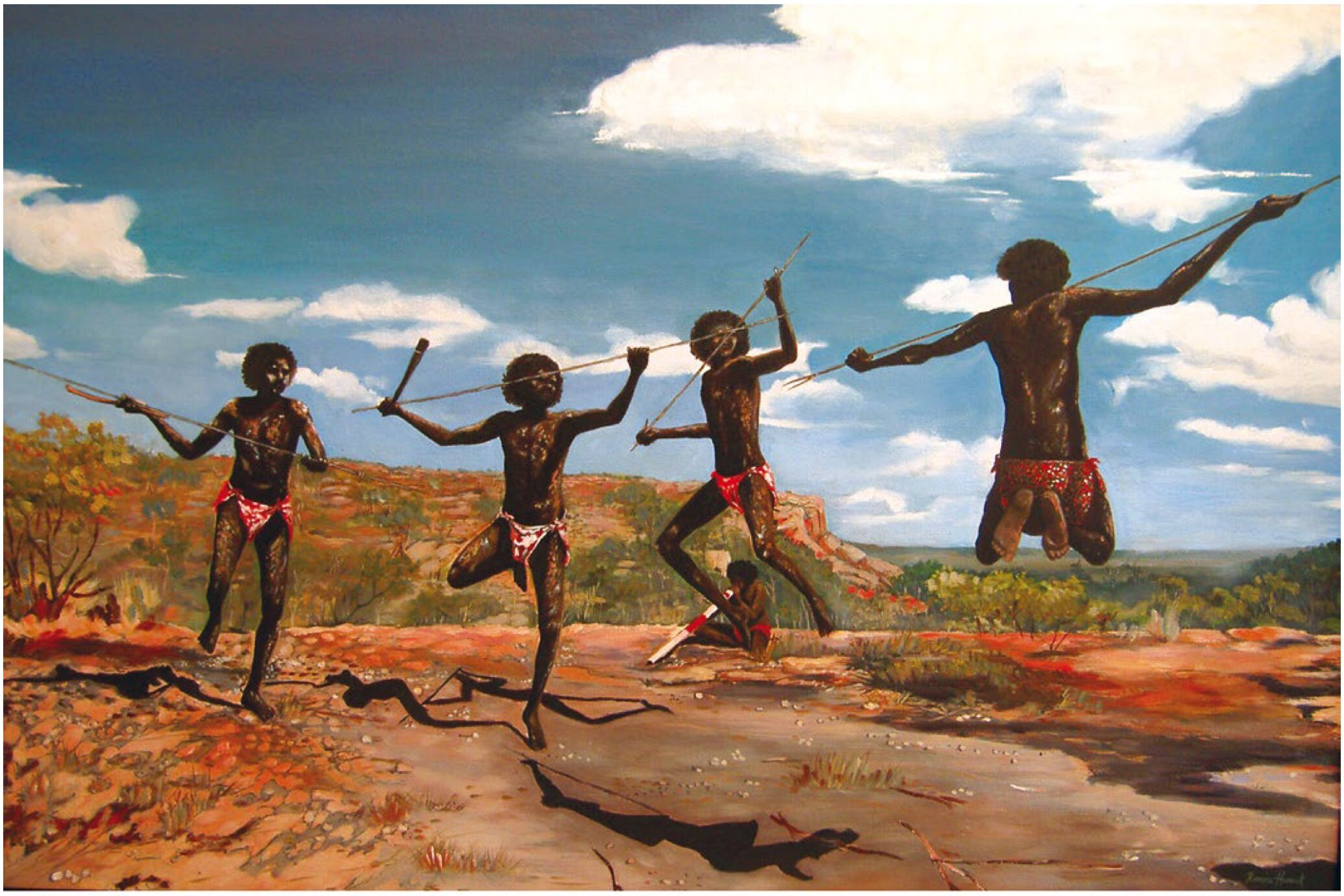
Painting Humanity

By Remia Montayre Homuk

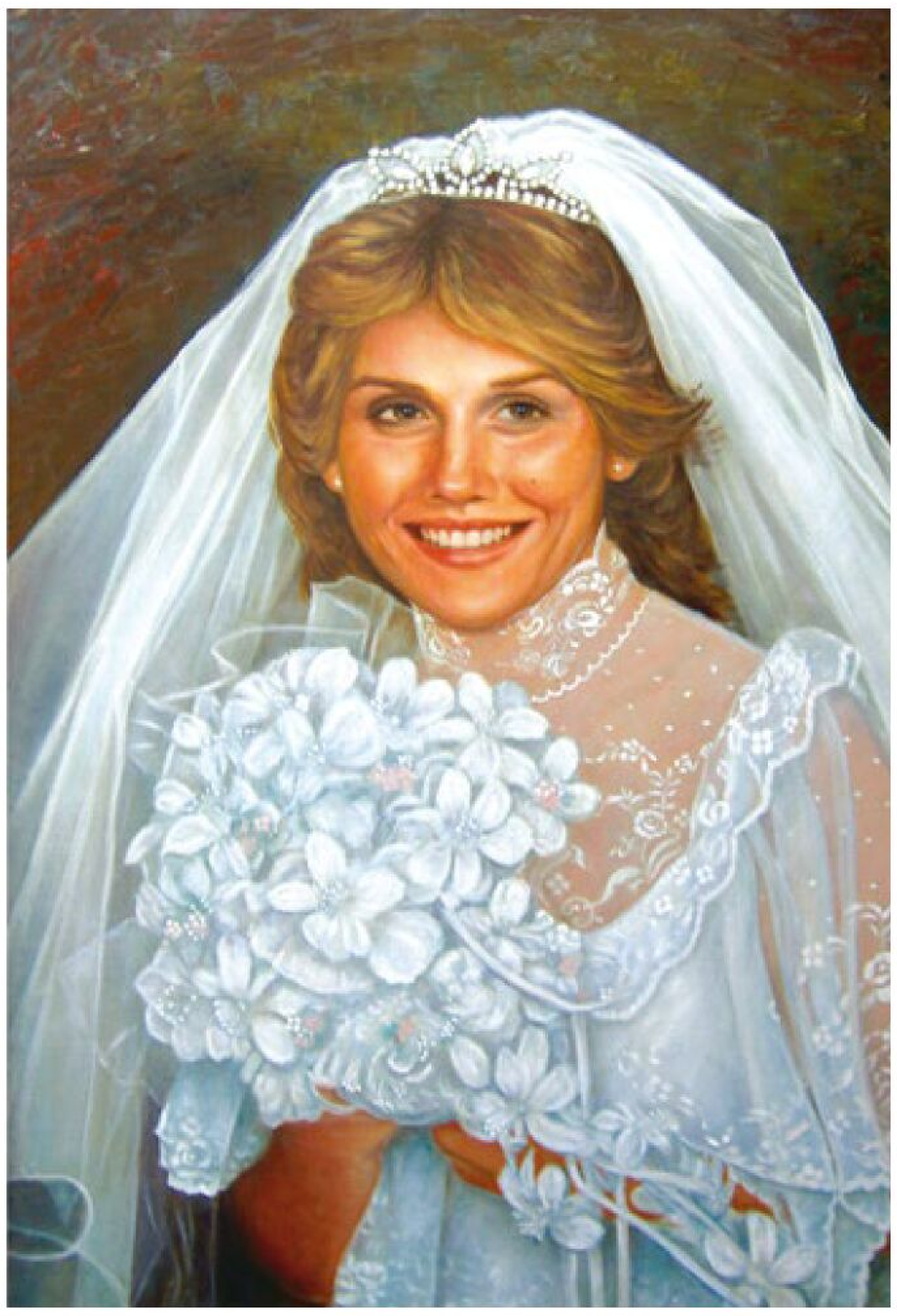
This portrait specialist uses her own eyes as her 'window to the soul' – capturing the feelings and emotions of her subjects on canvas.

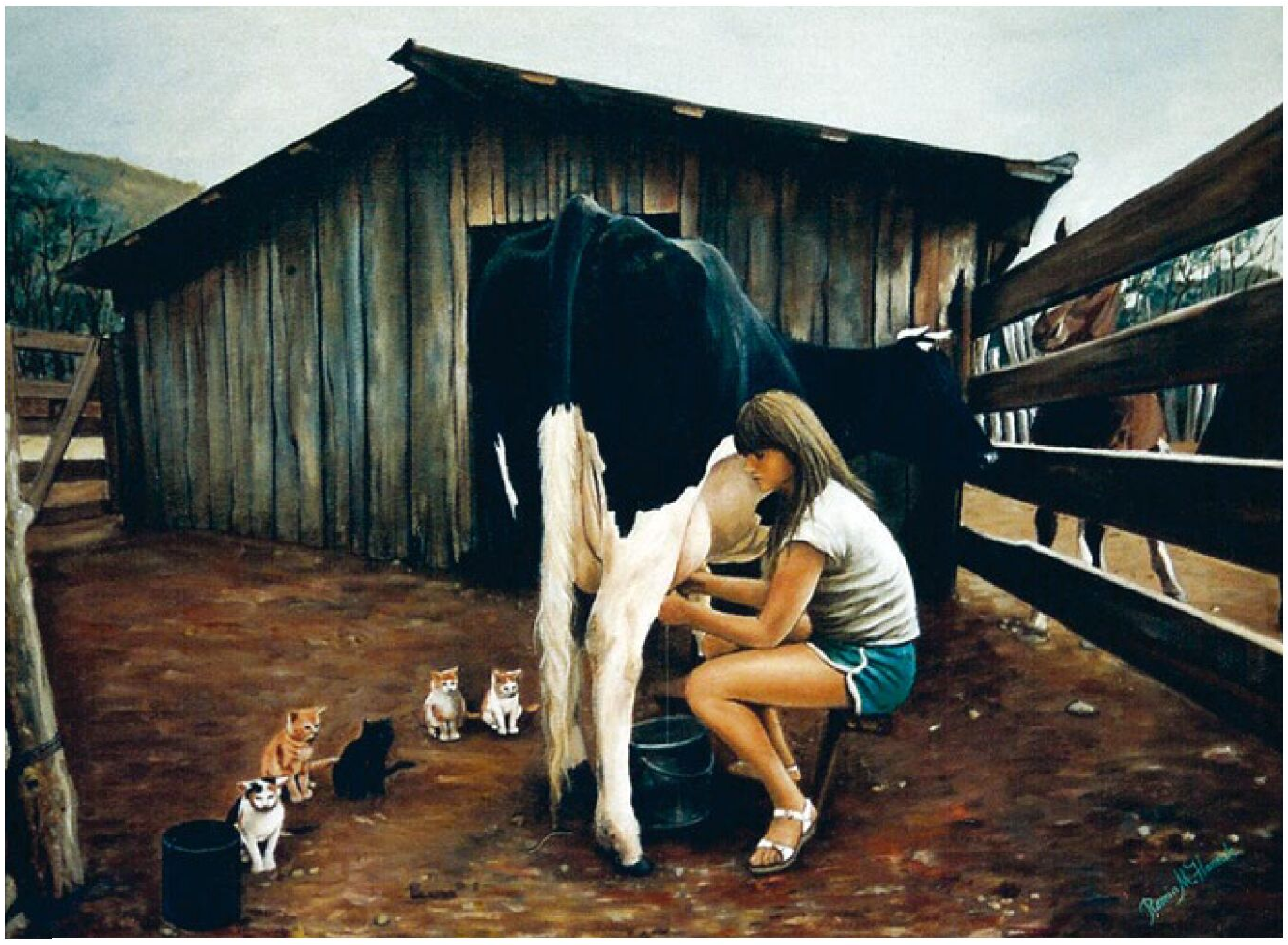


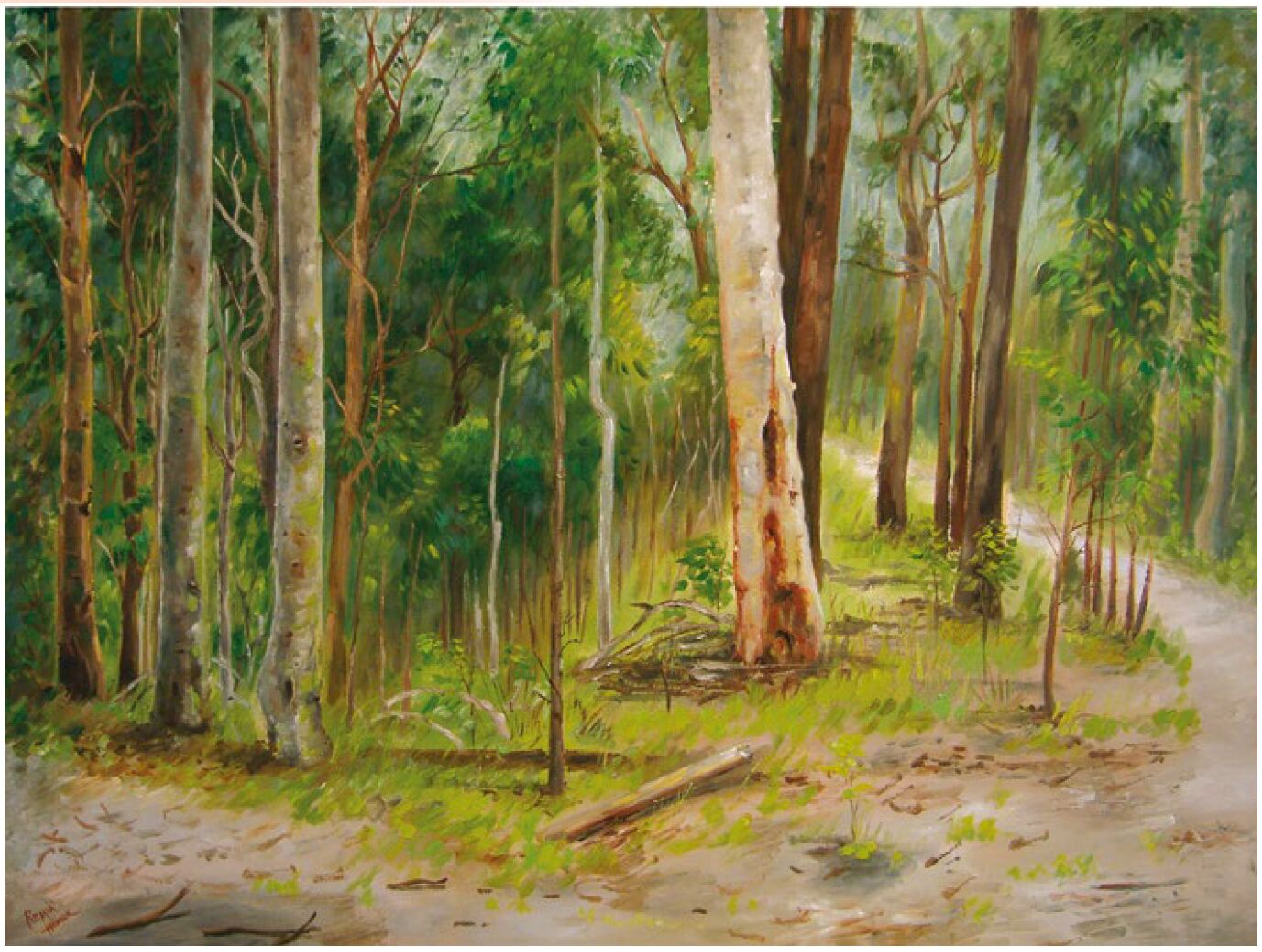


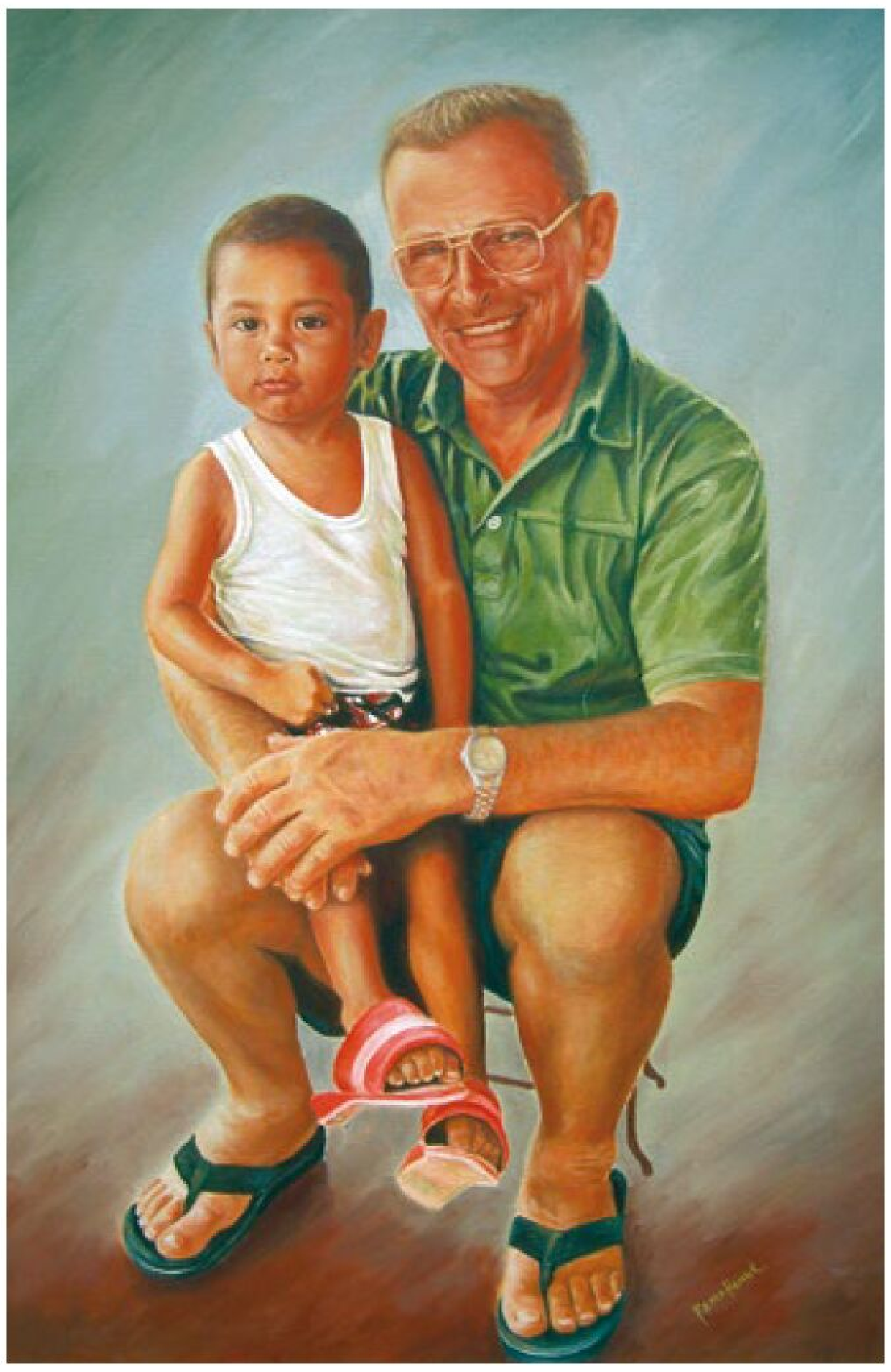
Remia Montayre Homuk is originally from the Philippines town of Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte. After moving to Sydney in 1984, she married and continued to follow her clear artistic destiny. This lady is a natural artist. She was born with the artistic gifts that she has nurtured and developed. She began to draw human faces and forms at the age of three, and her talent grew with her through childhood.

Above: The Dance
Below left: The Bride
Below right: Milking Time
Opposite page: Family





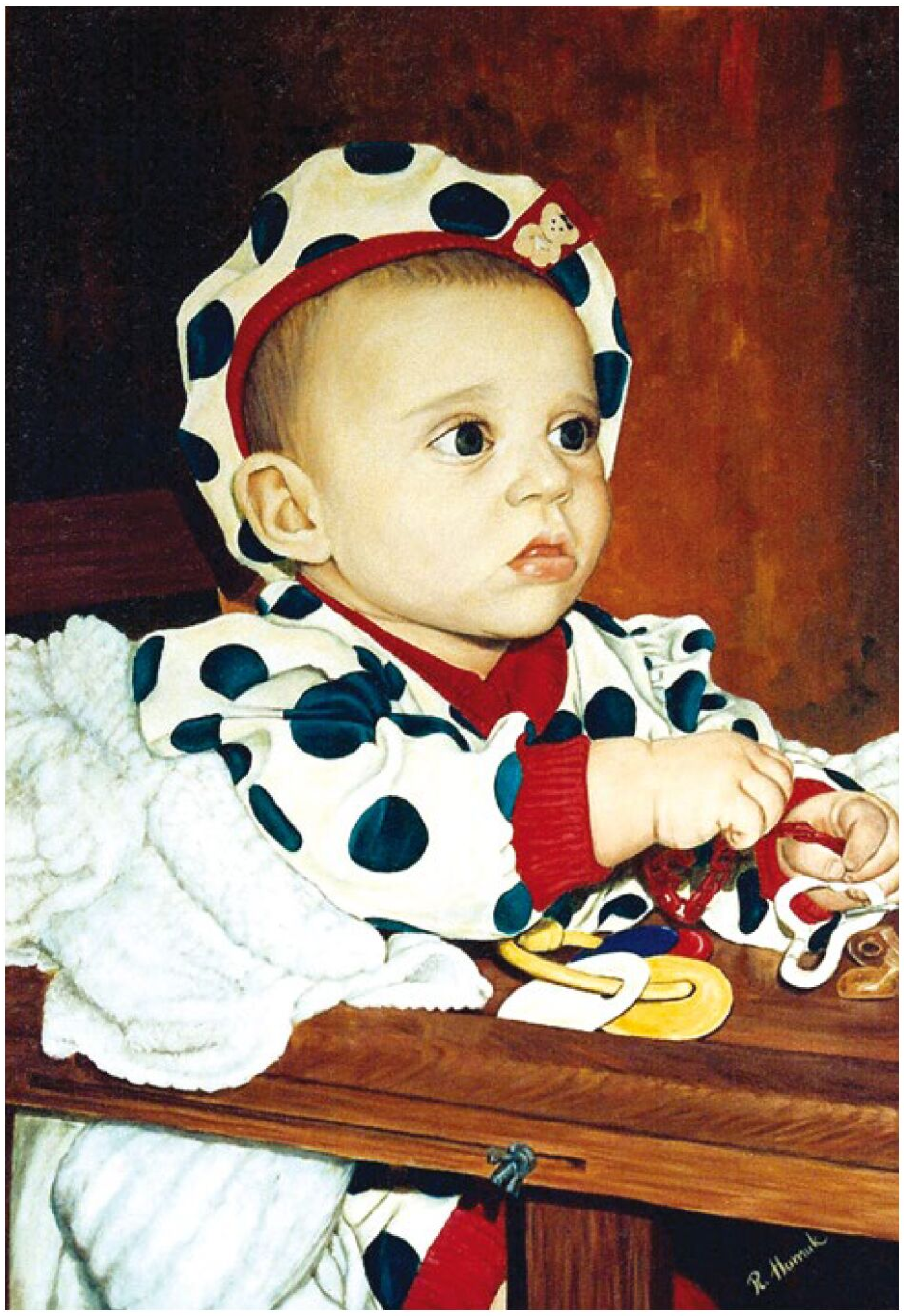


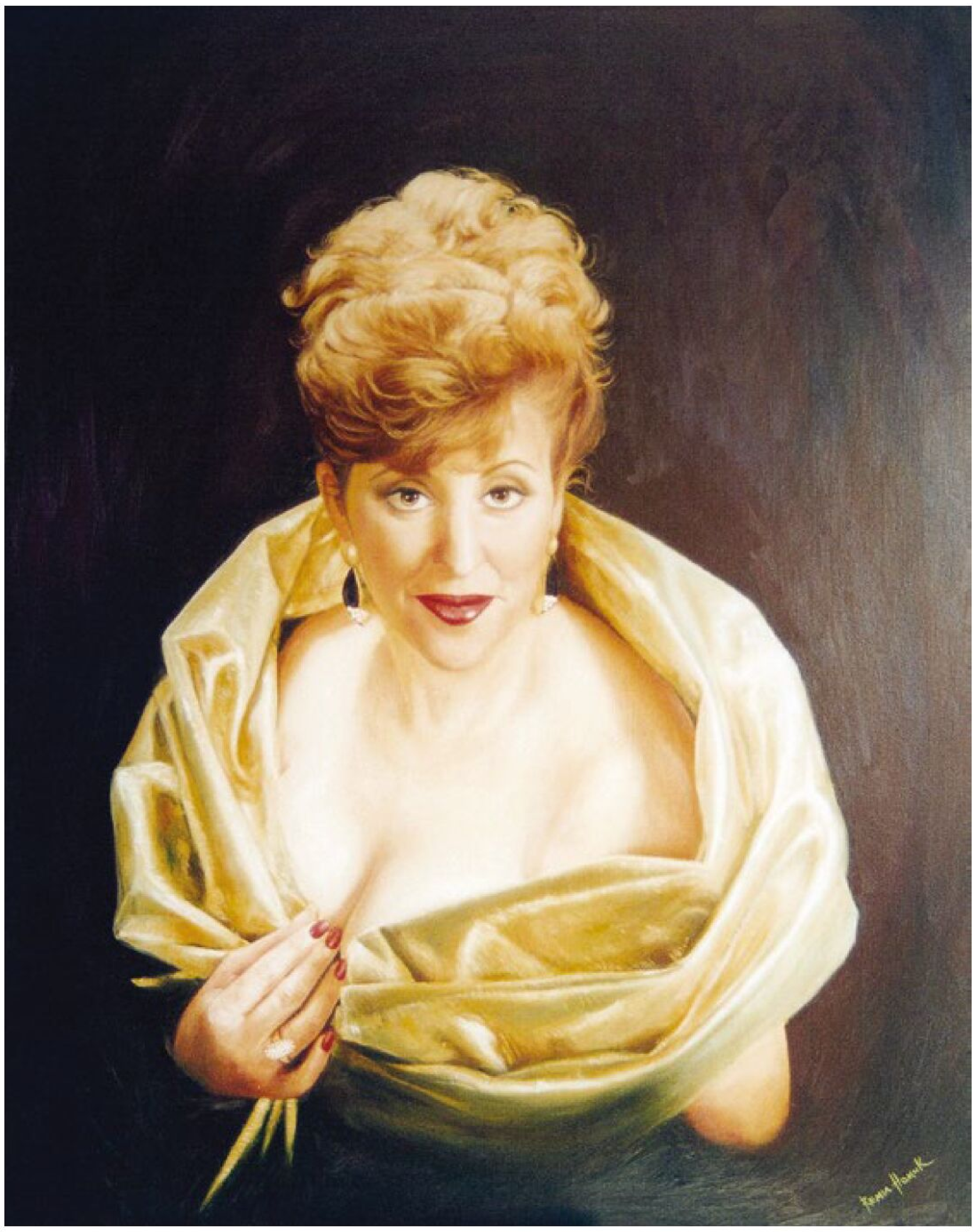


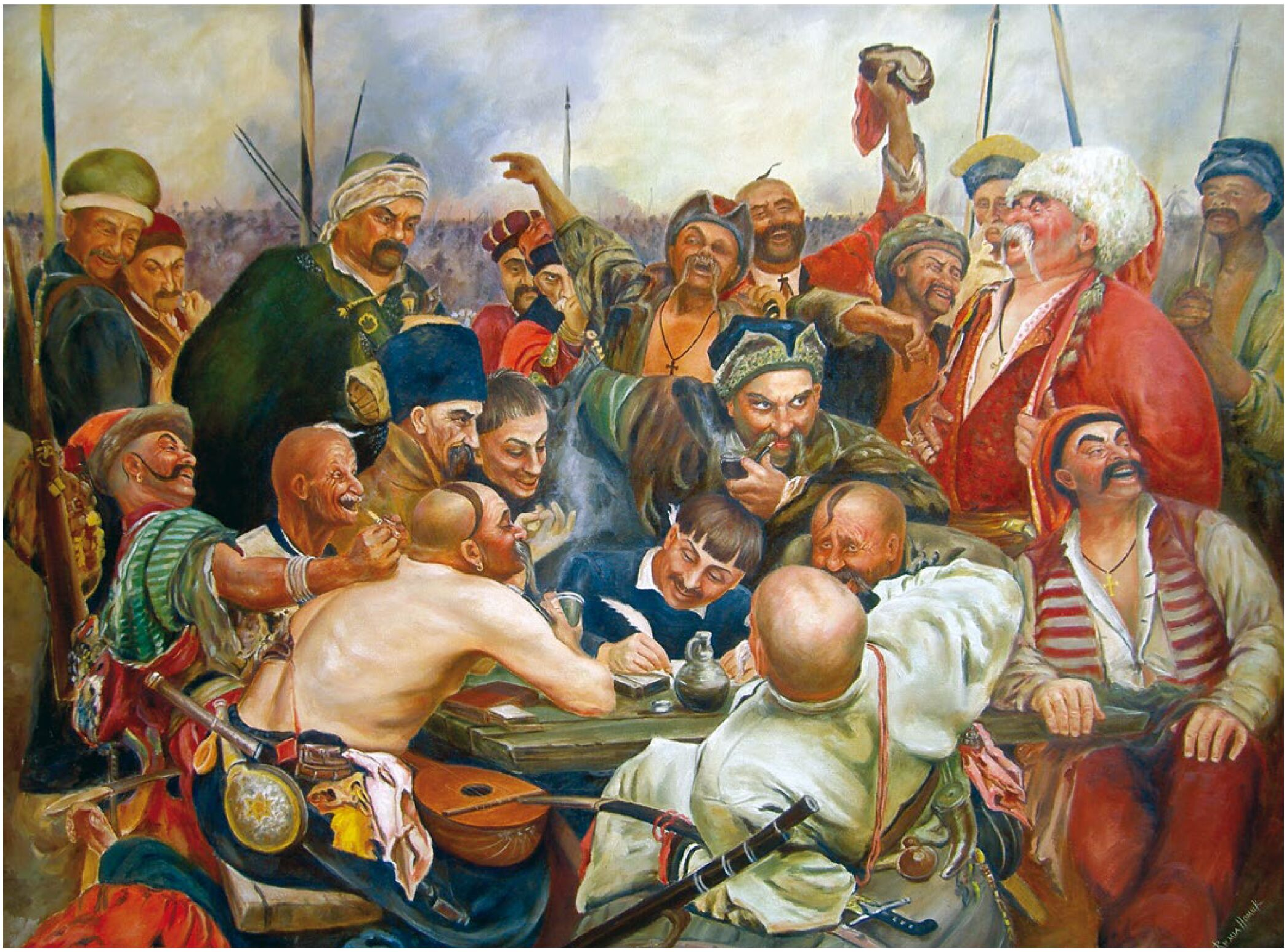
Above left: The Bush
Above right: Nick and Sam
Below left: Baby
Below right: Jennifer

At the tender age of 15, Remia was commissioned to sculpt the Holy Family for a private collection.

With an artistic family background, Remia Homuk enjoyed a fertile environment in which to grow her talents. Her father (a sculptor) encouraged her to study architecture. Her mother was a school teacher. Remia is also a







guitarist – with significant skills in the performing arts. She was a guitar playing member of the first all female band in Cebu; and spent two years performing in the Philippines and Japan.

A new life in Australia opened this artist's eyes to more vital influences. Here she became interested to learn different artistic techniques. Delving into numerous books and other resources, she developed her love for the works of renowned artists such as Caravaggio (from Italy) and Elya Repin (from Russia).

In 1989, Remia began to accept serious commissions. This was also the year in which she decided to specialise in portrait painting. She loves to capture the feelings and emotions of her subjects with paint on canvas.

In May 1997, she completed a commissioned portrait of the Mayor and Councillors of her native home town – a work which was hung in the Municipal Town Hall in Sindangan.

In August 1997, she joined 'Arts Alive'. This was promptly followed by her winning first prize in the 'Traditional' section of the 1998 Arts Alive Trophy Exhibition.

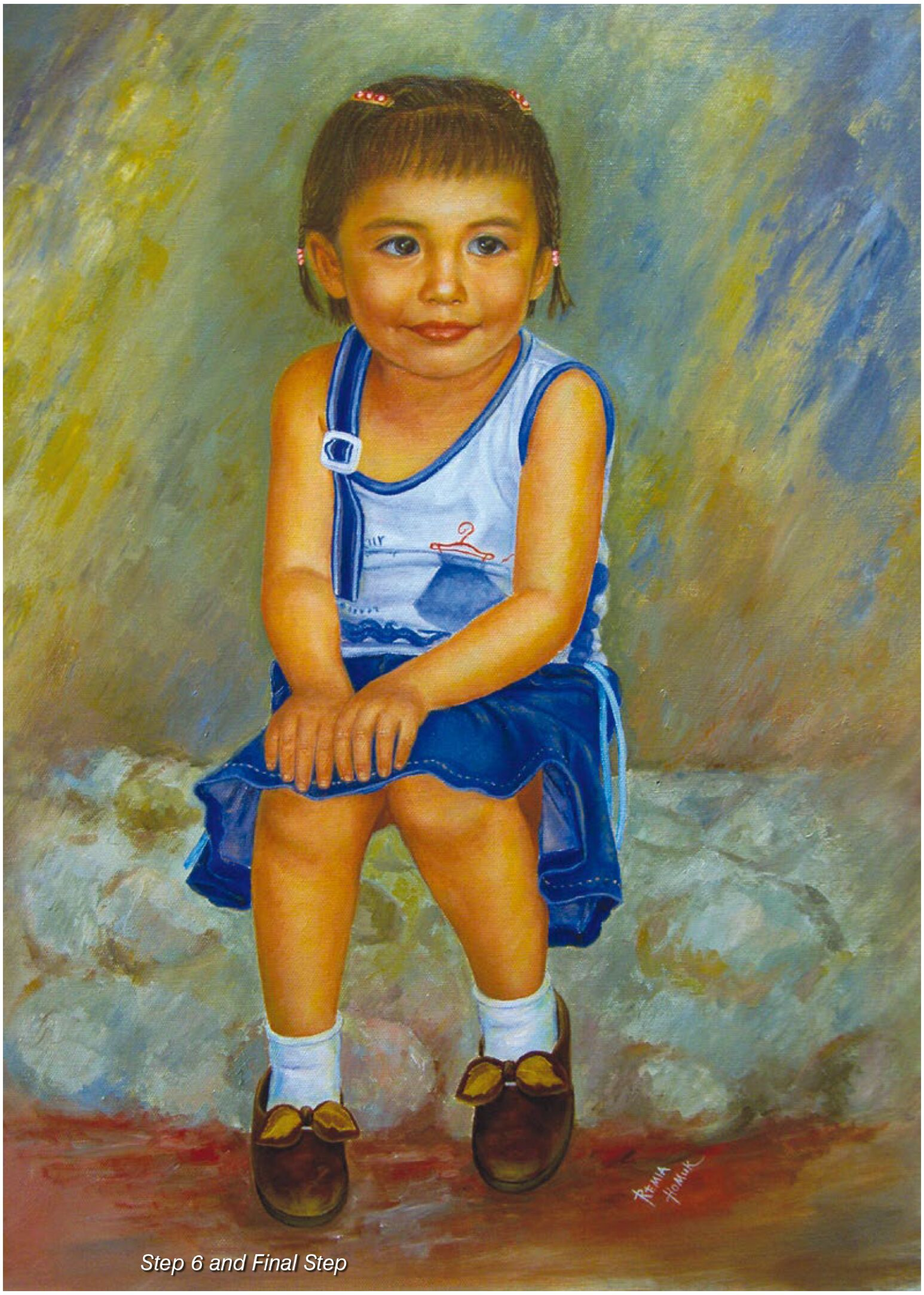
Remia Montayre Homuk continues to fine-tune her skills in the visual arts while she dreams of achieving her own unique style. With discipline and humility, she believes that success is possible. If success can be measured in a rich proliferation of masterful pictures, she has already achieved it. ■

Above: Tarasbulba (Reproduction – major changes done)

> "She loves to capture the feelings and emotions of her subjects with paint on canvas."

Just a Girl

By Remia Homuk

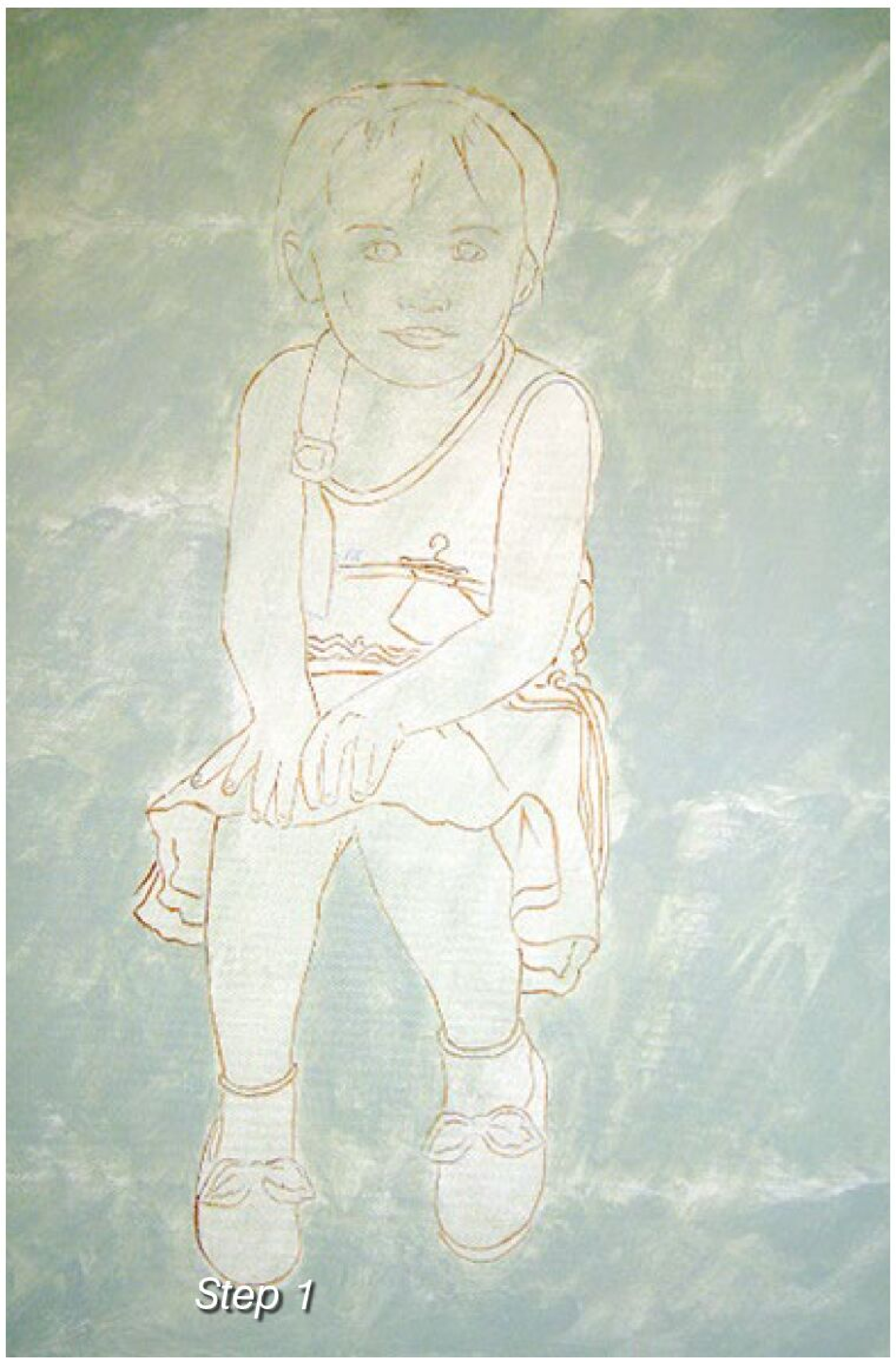


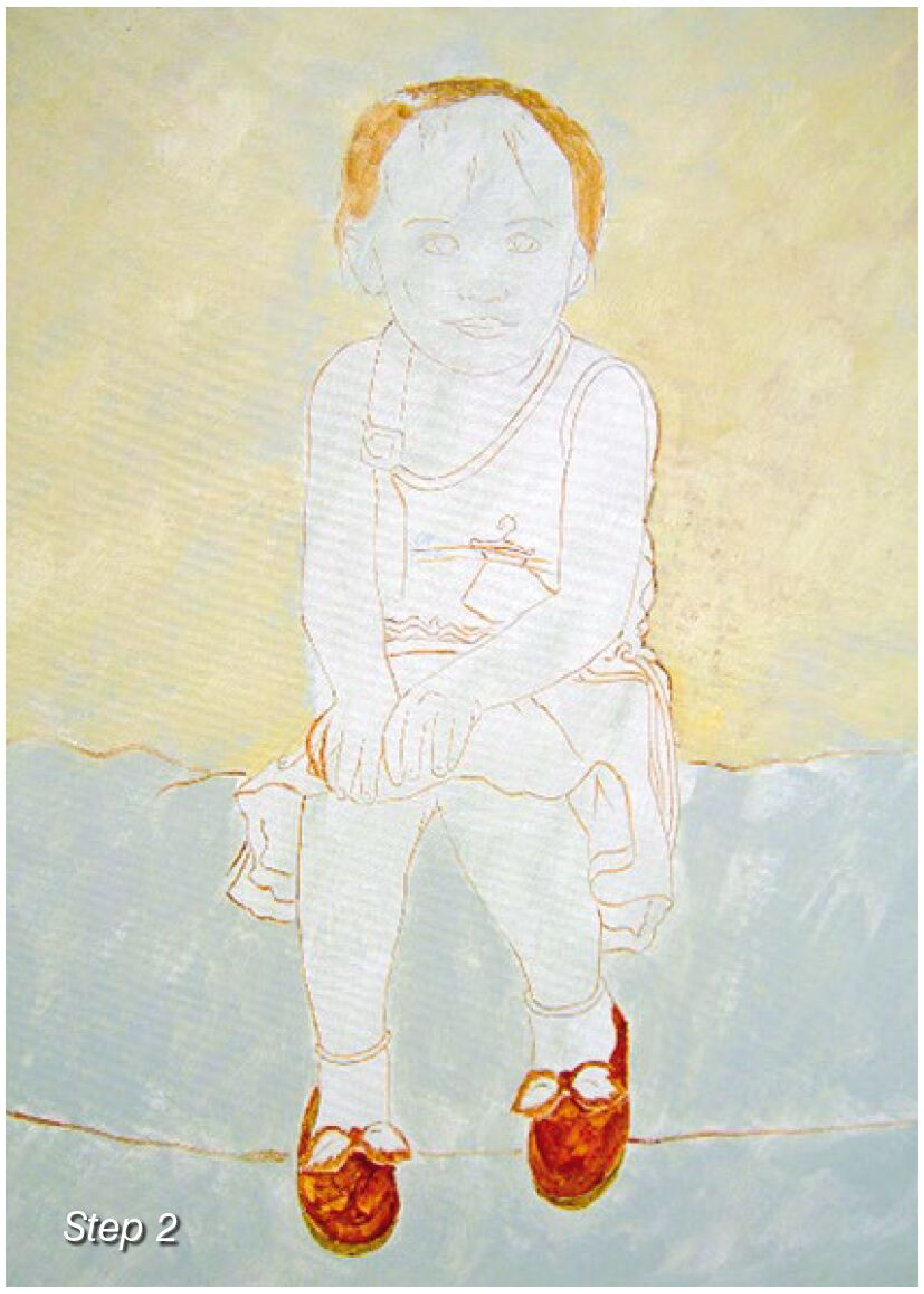
Step 6 and Final Step

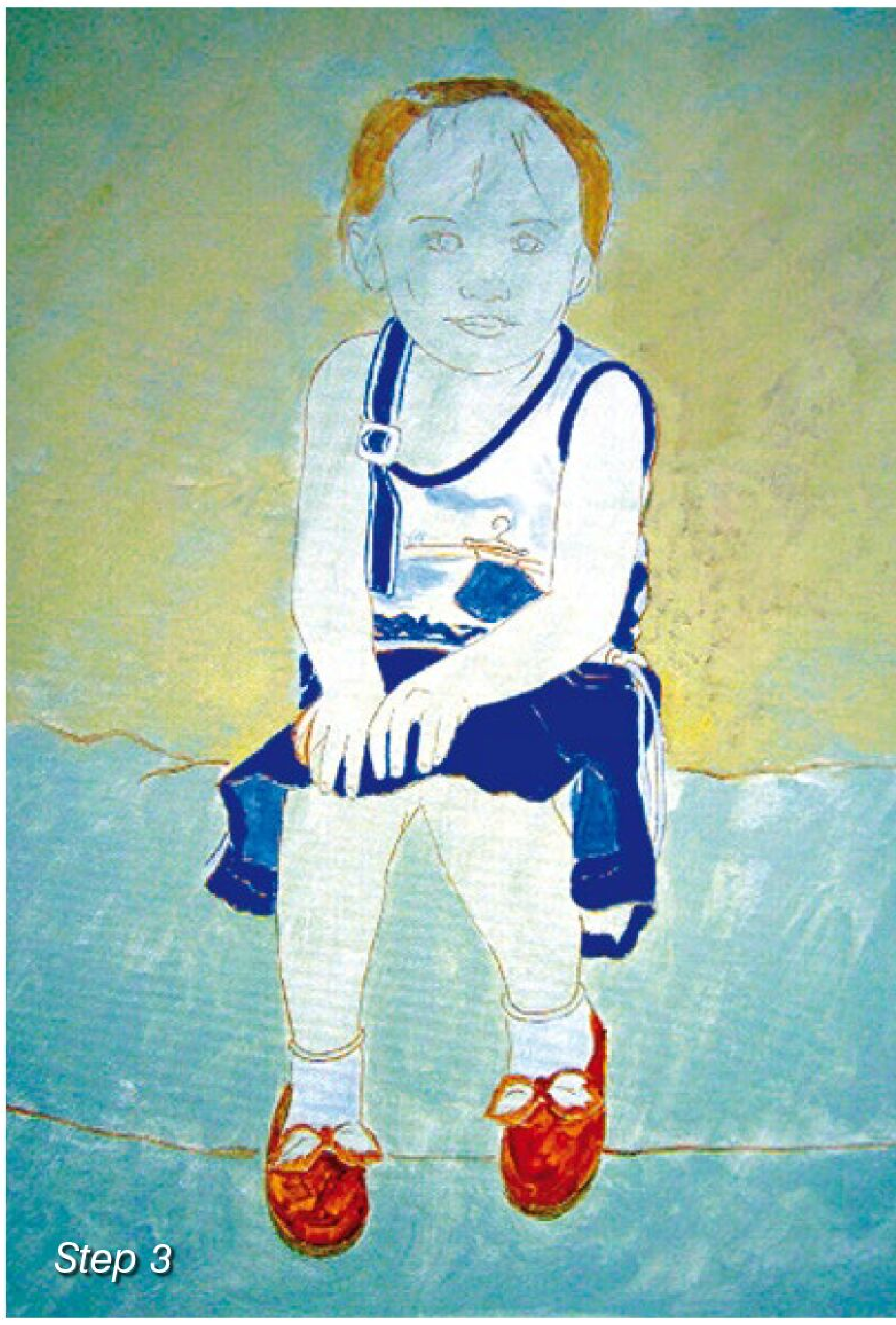
This portrait specialist enjoys listening to music while painting, because it helps her to relax and concentrate. She also believes that good natural lighting is very important.

MATERIALS

- Pure Cotton Duck Canvas –18 x 24 inches. Triple Primed with Acrylic Gesso; acid free; staple free edge.
- Artists' Acrylic Paints: White; Yellow Ochre; Cadmium Red; Burnt Sienna; Raw Umber; Cobalt Blue.
- Art Spectrum Oil Paints (Professional Quality): White; Yellow Ochre; Cadmium Red; Burnt Sienna; Raw Umber; Cobalt Blue Deep; Viridian; Phthalo Blue.
- Various Artists' Brushes; Pencil; Palette Knife; Brush Cleaner; Water; Paper Towel and Rags.


Step 1


Step 2


Step 3

STEP ONE
With acrylics, I undercoat the canvas roughly with a light blue mixture of White, Cobalt Blue and a touch of Yellow Ochre. I sketch my subject with pencil on tracing paper and transfer the drawing onto the dried canvas before outlining with Burnt Sienna.

STEP TWO
I begin painting the background using a mixture of White, Yellow Ochre, a touch of Burnt Sienna and a little Cobalt Blue (all acrylics). I also paint the shoes with Burnt Sienna; and dilute Raw Umber with water for the hair.

STEP THREE
Still using acrylics, I start to paint the singlet top with Cobalt Blue, Light Blue and White; then the skirt with Cobalt Blue and Light Blue.

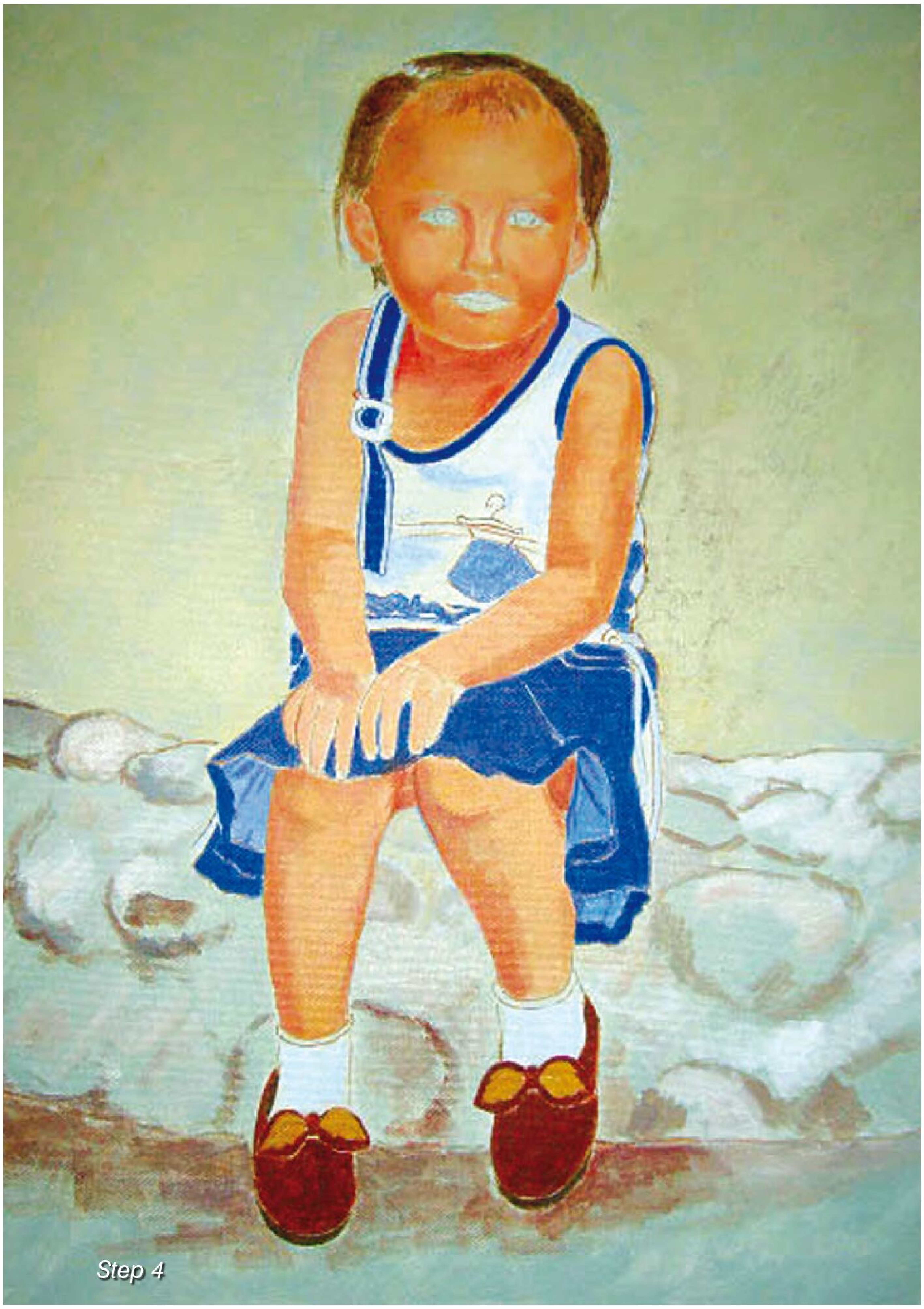
STEP FOUR
I use acrylics in Yellow Ochre, White and a touch of Cadmium Red for the skin tones. I paint the face, neck, arms and legs. Then I add a touch of Viridian and Burnt Sienna for the light shadows. I paint the shoes with Burnt Sienna for the second coat and Yellow Ochre for the design; and I add Raw Umber to the hair. I also start to paint the low stone fence using Burnt Sienna, Cobalt Blue and White. I then allow the work to dry.

STEP FIVE
Moving now to oil paints, I mix White, Yellow Ochre and a touch of Cadmium Red for the skin tones. I add a touch of Viridian and Burnt Sienna for the light shadows and start blending shadows with a clean brush. I add more White to the skin tones mixture for highlights, and blend in … before starting to apply details to the face, eyes, nose and lips.

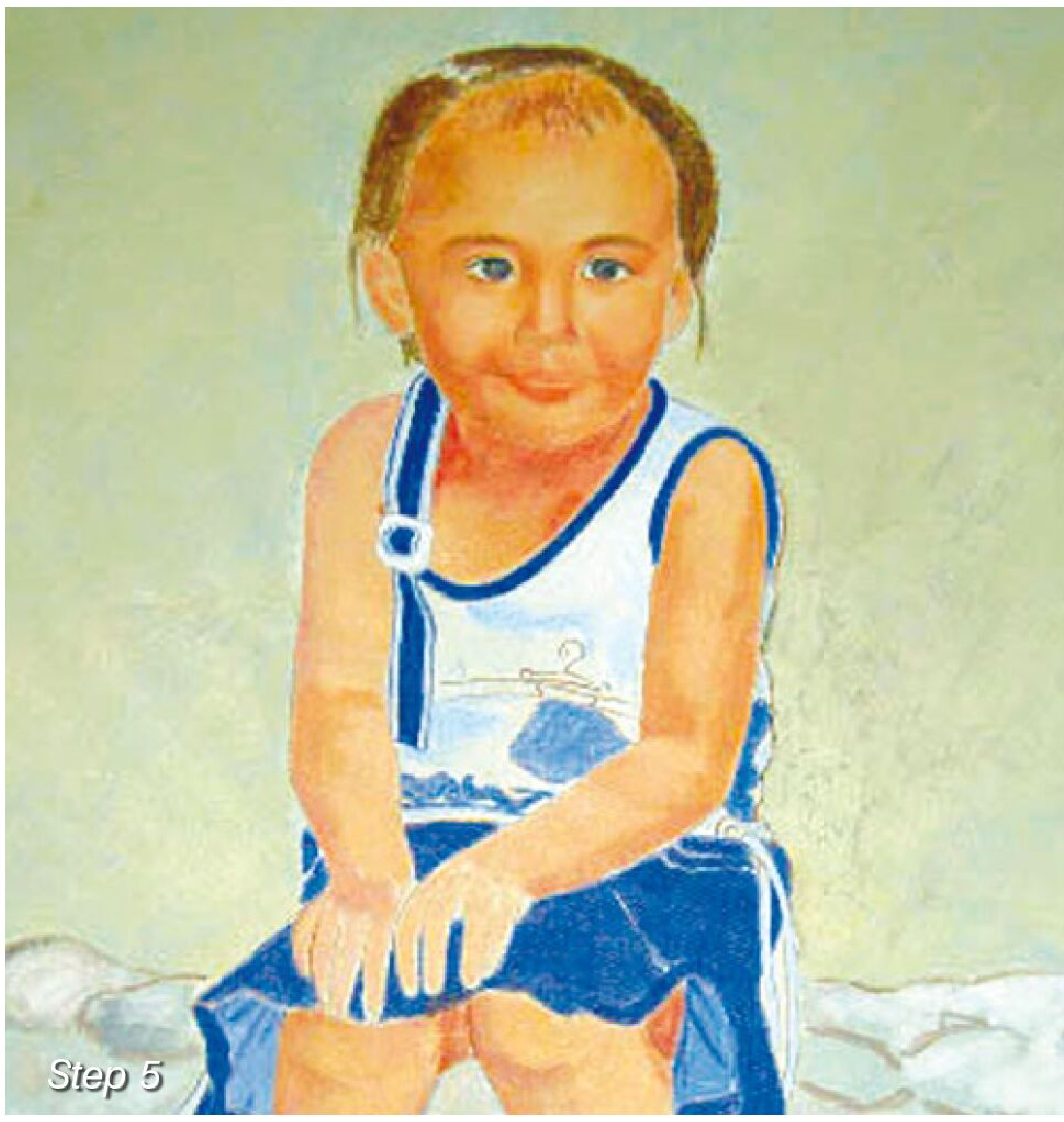
STEP SIX
With a mixture of Burnt Sienna, Cadmium Red, a touch of Viridian, and White, I paint the shadows of the face, nose, and neck; and blend in. I use the same technique for the arms and legs. For the lips, I use Cadmium Red and Yellow Ochre (with White

HINTS AND TIPS

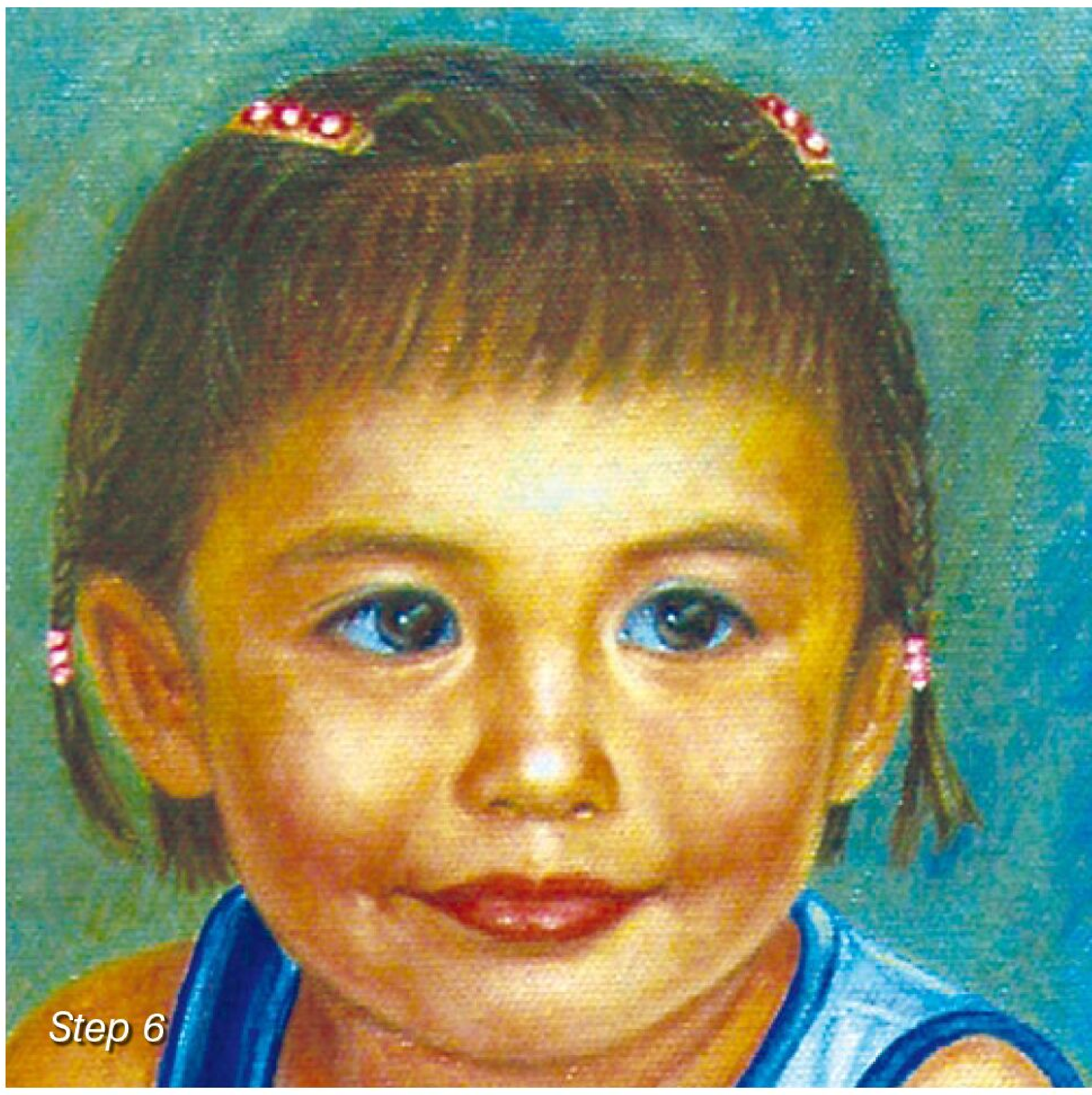
- Concentration is paramount, so avoid interruptions if possible.
- Apply each colour only when the previous coat is sufficiently dry.
- Cover your painting for a few days before the final touch-up … this will help you to determine if any alterations are needed on your work.



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6

added for the highlights). I use White, Cobalt Blue, Cadmium Red and a touch of Burnt Sienna for the eyes. I finish the hair with Raw Umber, Burnt Sienna, Cobalt Blue and Yellow Ochre. For the hairclips and bands, I use Cadmium Red, White and Yellow Ochre; before adding White to the skin tones mixture for highlights (and blending in).

FINAL STEP

I complete the background using Cobalt Blue, Yellow Ochre and a touch of Burnt Sienna; and adjust the foreground with Cobalt Blue, Cadmium Red and Burnt Sienna. Then I cover the painting and let it dry for a few days. I finally add more details, shadows and highlights to complete the painting. ■

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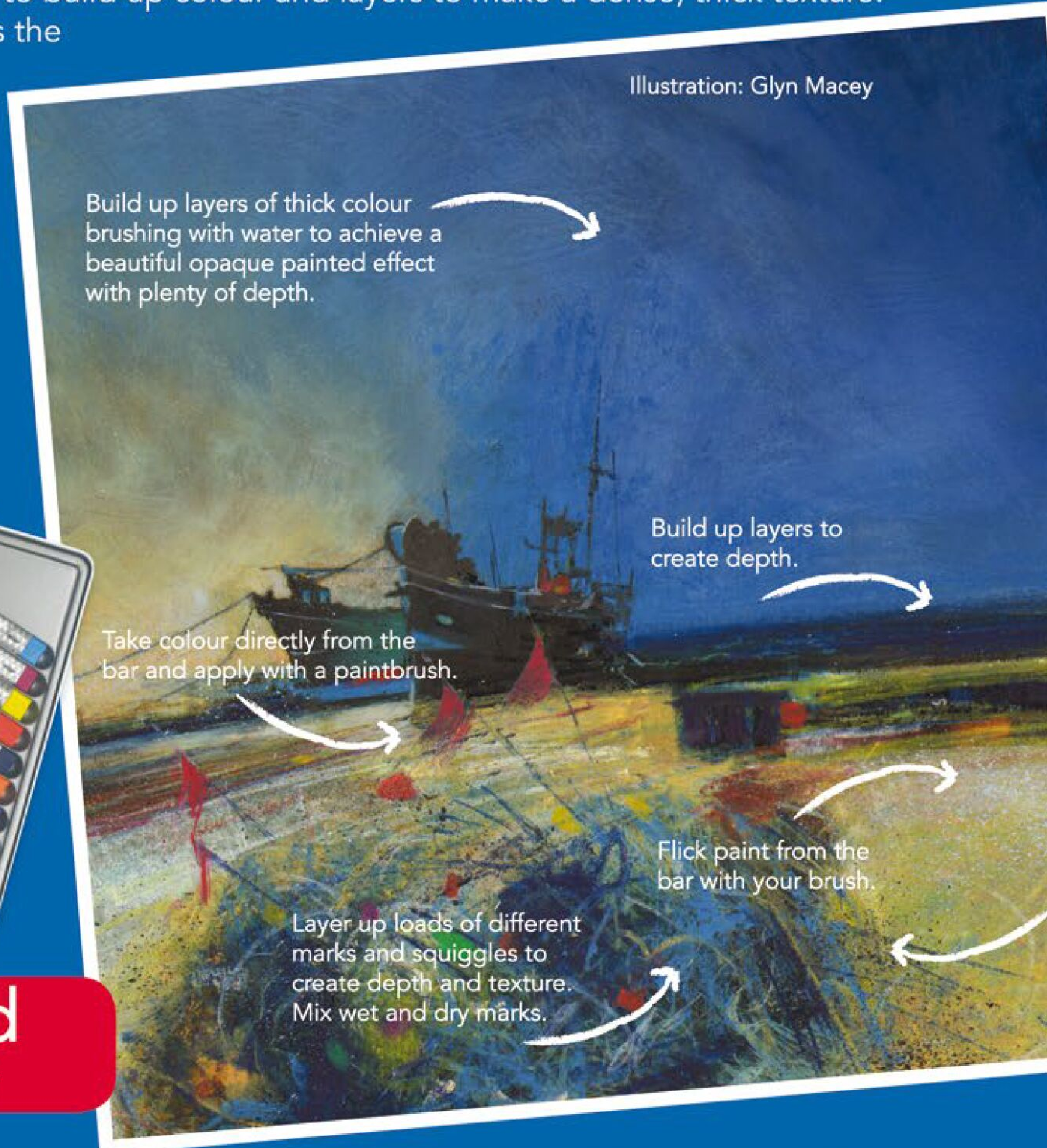
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"More Magic Tricks"

By Brett A. Jones

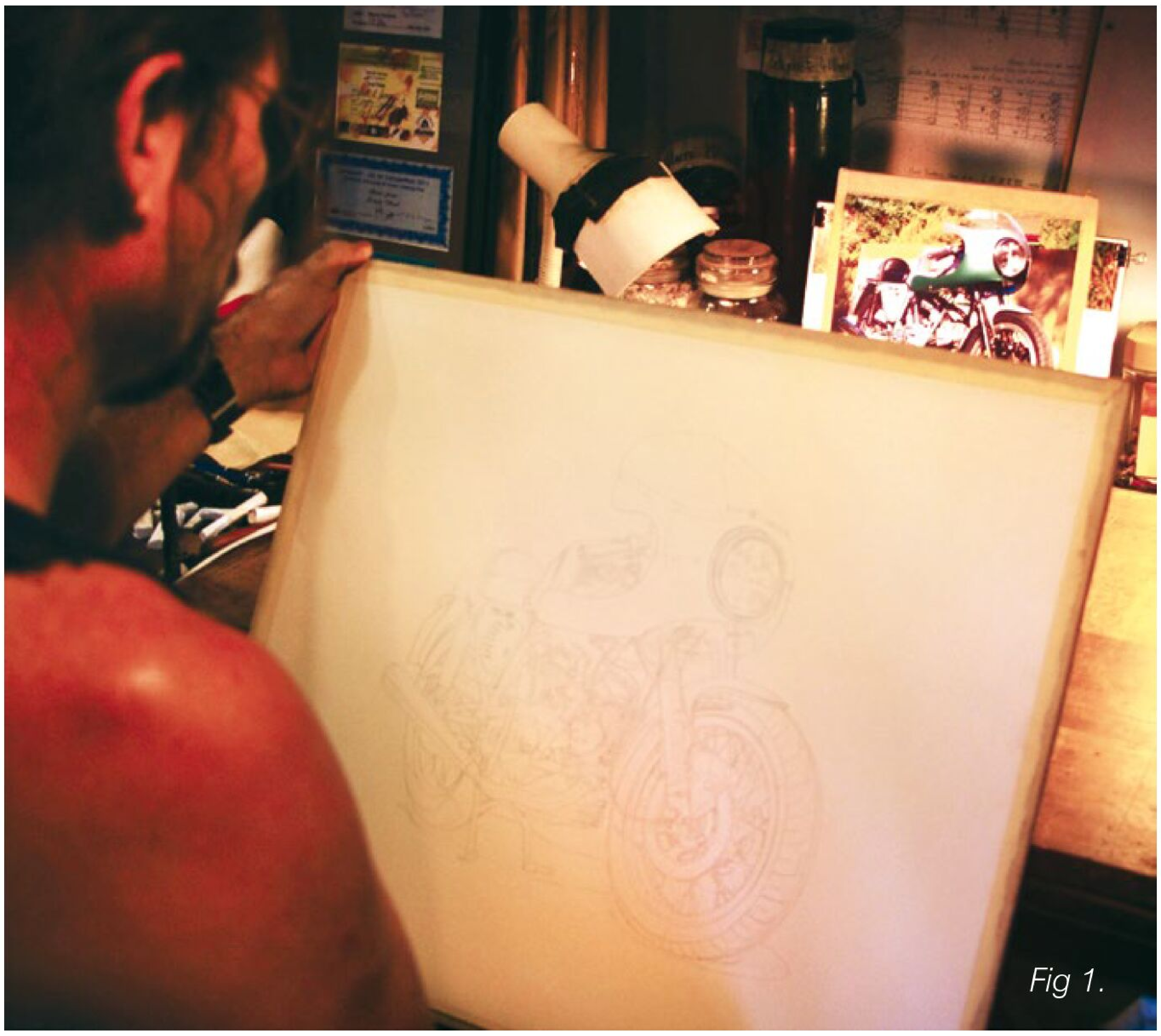

Fig 1:.Make sure you can look directly at both photo and drawing without moving your head, only your eyes.

In the last article we looked at what an indispensible proportional judgement tool the pencil in your hand can be in the process of creating an accurate freehand line drawing. There are other techniques in the same vein that don't require anything but your eyes so I will endeavour in this case to lay down some more very useful information to help you with your freehand drawing journey that with a bit (or a lot) of practise should soak in deep and become second nature to be dragged out of your subconscious instinctively whenever required and used to mercilessly flog any drawing project into abject submission.

The first one that comes to mind is when you are well and truly stumped and for the life of you can't seem to decide why your layout isn't right while simultaneously knowing that it definitely isn't. Make sure the photo you are drawing (or en plein air scene, still life, or subject) is directly in front of you and if a photo ensure it's not on an angle in any way. I clip an A4 photo to a piece of masonite with bulldog clips and lean it up against something on my drawing table so I can finely adjust the angle I am looking at it on. It's very important that it's not standing up too straight, leaning too much or skewed to left or right. My apologies to those to whom it seems I am stating the painfully obvious but I'm always surprised by people who don't think it's that important or don't think about it at all. This doesn't apply to drawing straight from life as you are obviously always looking directly at reality. Once you are sure you are looking directly at the centre of the photo study pick up the layout board your drawing's taped to and tip it up so it's on the same plane as the photo board. I draw flat sitting at a table so I prop it up on the edge and rest it on my knees (fig 1). This trick's a lot easier if you work at an easel as your photo and drawing are already on the same plane (fig 2). The idea is to be able to see both the photo and drawing without moving your head. Just flick your eyes up to the photo and down to the drawing (over and over). You might not see anything at first (or it might jump straight out at you) but be patient and just keep doing it, don't look at anything in particular but at

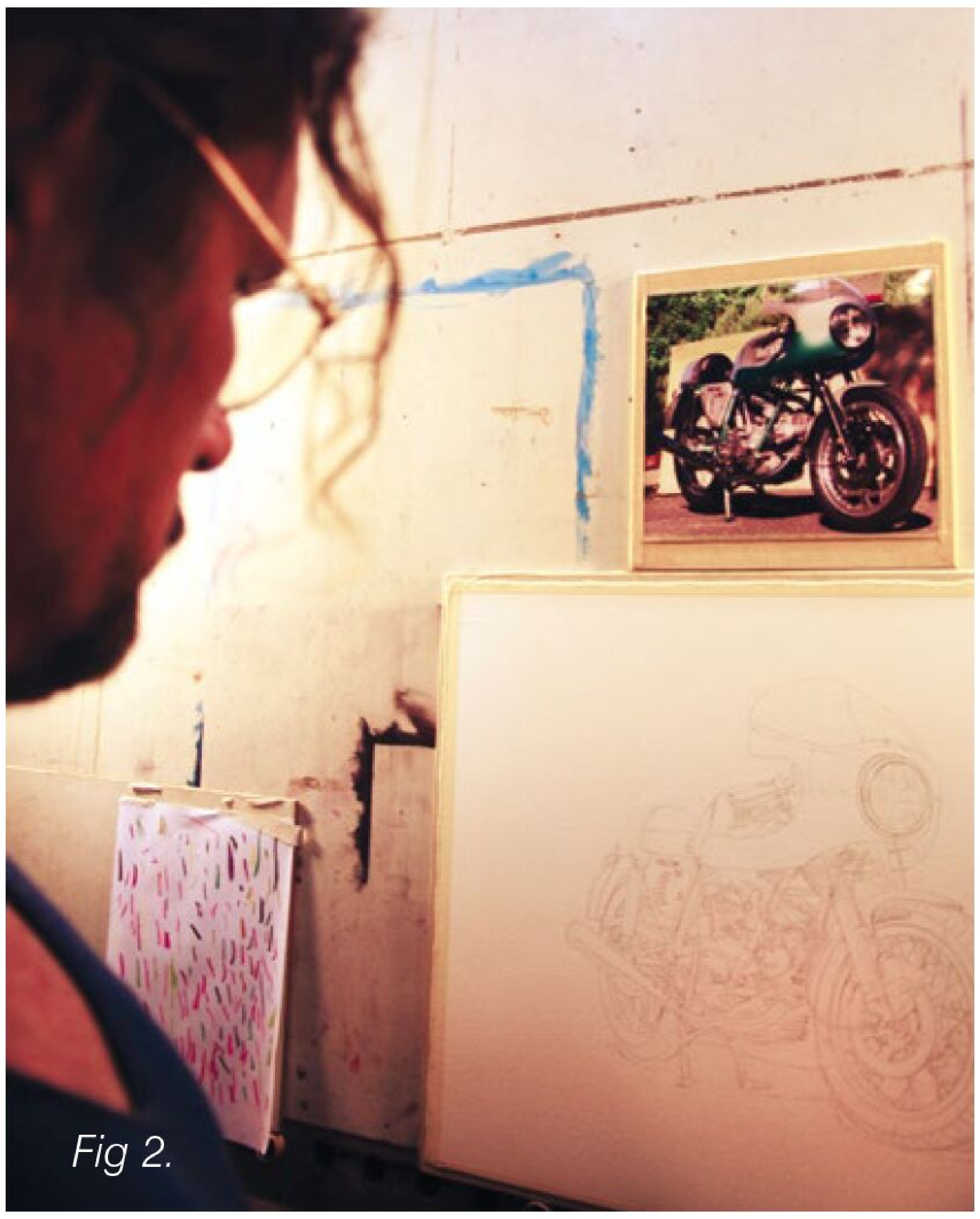
Fig 2.

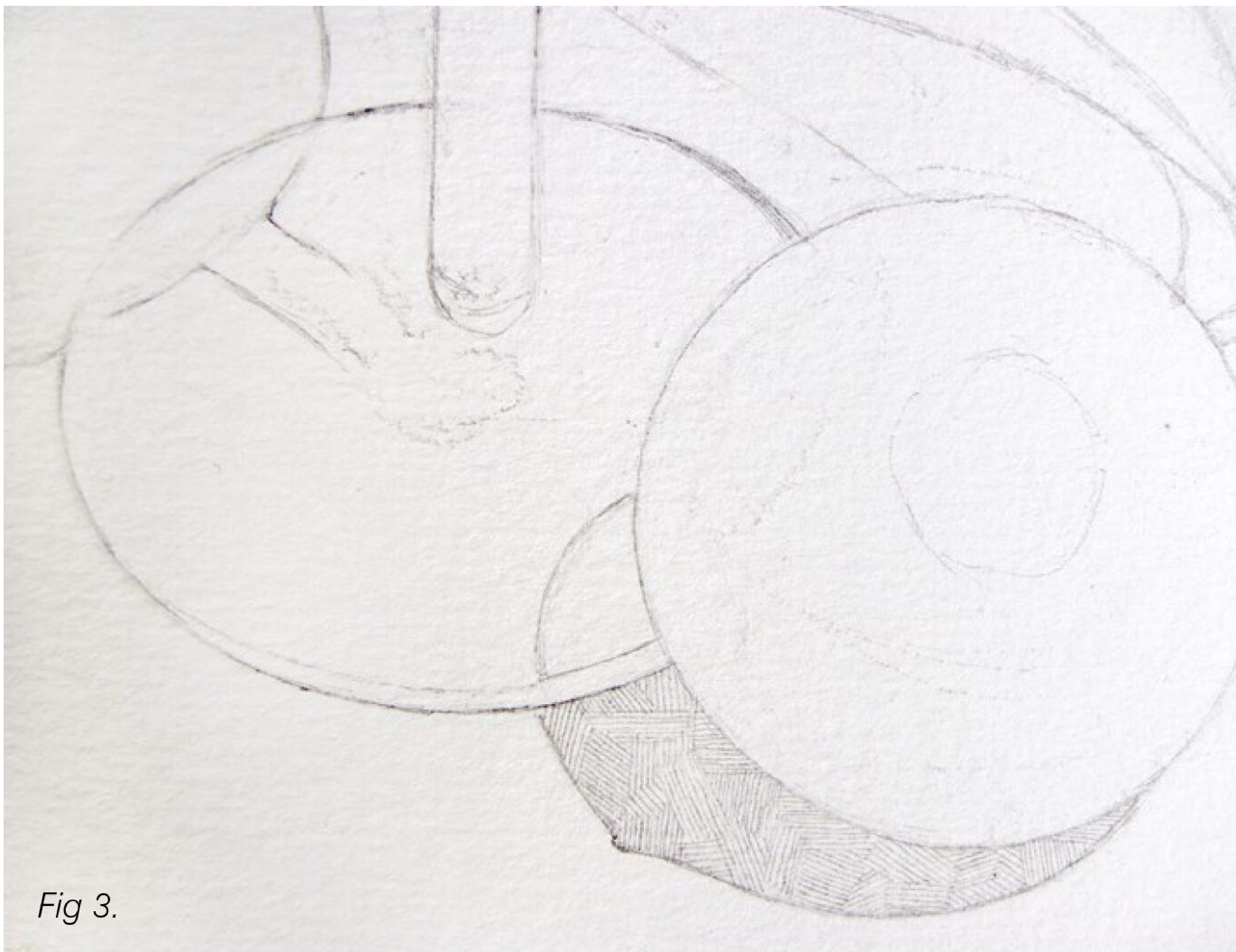
Fig 3.

the composition as a whole. Sooner or later but usually sooner you brain will get bored with the game and start to see the inconsistencies and point them out to you. The part or parts of your drawing which are wrong will start jumping backwards and forwards as your eyes flick from the photo to the drawing and back again almost like it's animated. Remember to keep your head dead still and only move your eyeballs or it won't work. Once your brain points out the problem you won't be able to not see it. Once you've isolated a particular inconsistency flick your eyes back and forth from photo to drawing concentrating on that area of the composition. You will learn a lot of real information you can use this way. Now you can push your layout board back up on your drawing board and continue refining your drawing knowing the part that needs altering instead of using the more common but much less effective methods of guessing and/or hoping for the best. You'll be surprised at how fine the errors spotted can be using this method and probably also surprised sometimes (I always am) at how obvious it seems once you've found where the problem is.

Another very handy trick is to not draw the actual objects that make up the composition but the abstract shapes, curves and lines they are made up of. Every single thing you will ever try to draw is really made up of a bunch of shapes that can plainly be seen once you stop looking at the wine bottle, apples, flowers, or whatever it actually is you are drawing and actively look for the shapes that make them up instead (they are always there). The first part of the trick is then to change these abstract shapes in your mind into recognizable shapes (i.e. feather, shark fin, letters, pirate sword, dolphin, chook head, face in profile, etc, etc) anything at all that it even remotely looks like (fig 3), once you see it you will think of that particular in the composition as that thing until you finish the drawing, The second part of the trick is to then look at the chook head or shark fin or whatever and then look at the chook head you have drawn on your layout, you will immediately see why your chook head is wrong and know how to change it as you're no longer seeing the actual objects or negative spaces anymore but the abstract shapes that make them up.

The third part of this intentional but constructive and helpful self delusion is to pick out two abstract shapes on the reference photo that can be seen as something else (pistol, egg,

> "Every single thing you will ever try to draw is really made up of a bunch of shapes that can plainly be seen once you stop looking at the wine bottle, apples, flowers, or whatever it actually is you are drawing."

Fig 2: This trick works great for those who draw on an easel

Fig 3: In this case, the lower (hatched) part of the limes shadow can be seen as an eagles talon, the upper part of the shadow as a sharks fin

> "Sometimes you have to completely disregard all the existing lines to fix an obvious problem or they will unfavourably influence your new lines."

cartoon character, boat, dogbone, it's endless once you give your imagination permission) and only taking notice of those two things and nothing else look at your drawing at the same two things. Straight away you will see if those two bits of your layout are right in relation to each other or not and if not why. They might be too close together, one too big, one on the wrong angle, or too high/low in relation to each other, etc. Instead of wondering why your bowl of fruit doesn't look right and not knowing why you will see the shark fin (part of an apple) is too close or far away from the chook head (end of a banana) and be able to move ahead with your drawing. This method will also work with three things but start with two until you can do it. These first three techniques apply equally from the largest roughly sketched shapes you start any drawing with right through to the finest and most minute details (fig 4). All are just abstract shapes with a positional relationship to each other.

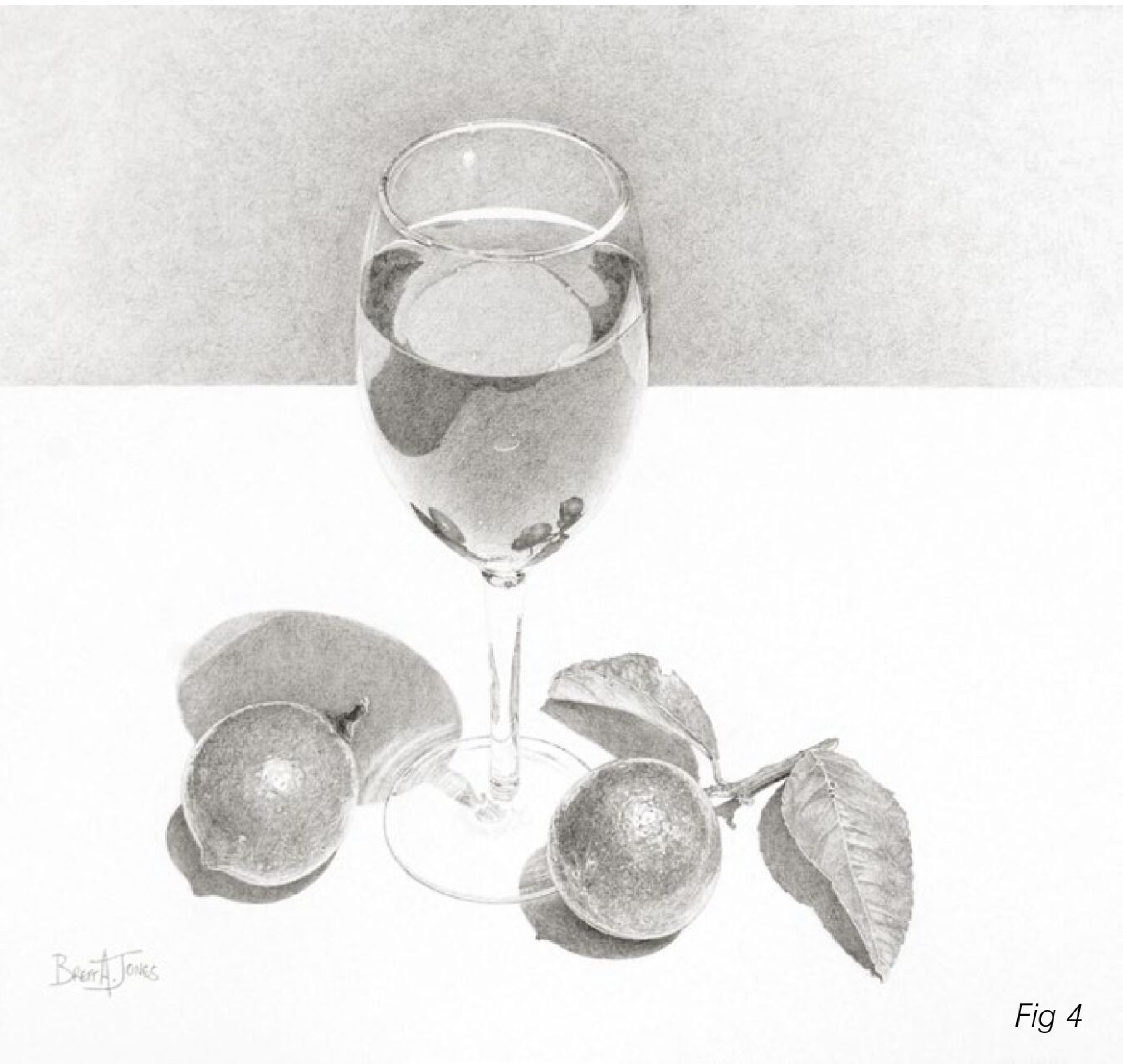

Fig 4

Fig 4. The end result of drawing abstract shapes instead of limes and wine glassof glass bowl and pencil

The fourth trick in this family is picking out an abstract shape out of an object or even just one curved line and drawing just that shape, line, or curve on a blank piece of paper. You won't be distracted by trying to draw the actual object in the composition or by trying to make the shape you have disembodied from the rest of the composition fit into all the other abstract shapes already down on the sketch. As soon as you sketch it a couple/few times you will see its actual proportional properties more clearly and the reasons why it has been driving you nuts on your drawing and see what you have to do to fix it. Always a great value way of spending a few minutes to get back on track without a lot of speculative/guess lines on your actual drawing.

If you do have to change things on your drawing to make the whole thing better then just do it. Sometimes (quite often in fact) you have to completely disregard all the existing lines to fix an obvious problem or they will unfavourably influence your new lines. Sometimes it's just a matter of having a bit of a careful cleanup with a clean eraser and spending a bit of time refining and clarifying the lines you have already got down in order to see the whole problem more clearly.

Once you can freely and bravely (but still lightly and carefully, being brave isn't pushing harder and harder on the pencil) make necessary changes to any given aspect of your drawing especially in the earlier stages you will become far more accurate in your laying out and make progress much more quickly. Sometimes the sayings that have been around forever explain things best which is probably why they have lasted so long, in this case the perfect one is 'make haste slowly'. Giving yourself unlimited time to execute a freehand fine art work in graphite doesn't mean sitting there staring at it, if you apply these practical techniques and use them to show the way forward you will be surprised at how fast the end of a drawing (fig 5) can sneak up on you,

Brett A. Jones

Above The Coast No.2 2010
by Peter Griffen

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Brush Strokes

In the last article, we used limited and simple brush techniques to create a very quick landscape. I want to show you how versatile some of these skills are.

We can create a completely different image using the same techniques with subtle differences. Because I'm often asked how I make water look realistic, I thought we would bury the techniques in an exercise, AND at the same time get a basic understanding of the elements that make up water.

I've taken parts of this article from our web tutorial www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/how-to-paint-water.html, and have modified it specifically to investigate some brush techniques.

For those of you who really want to transform the way you

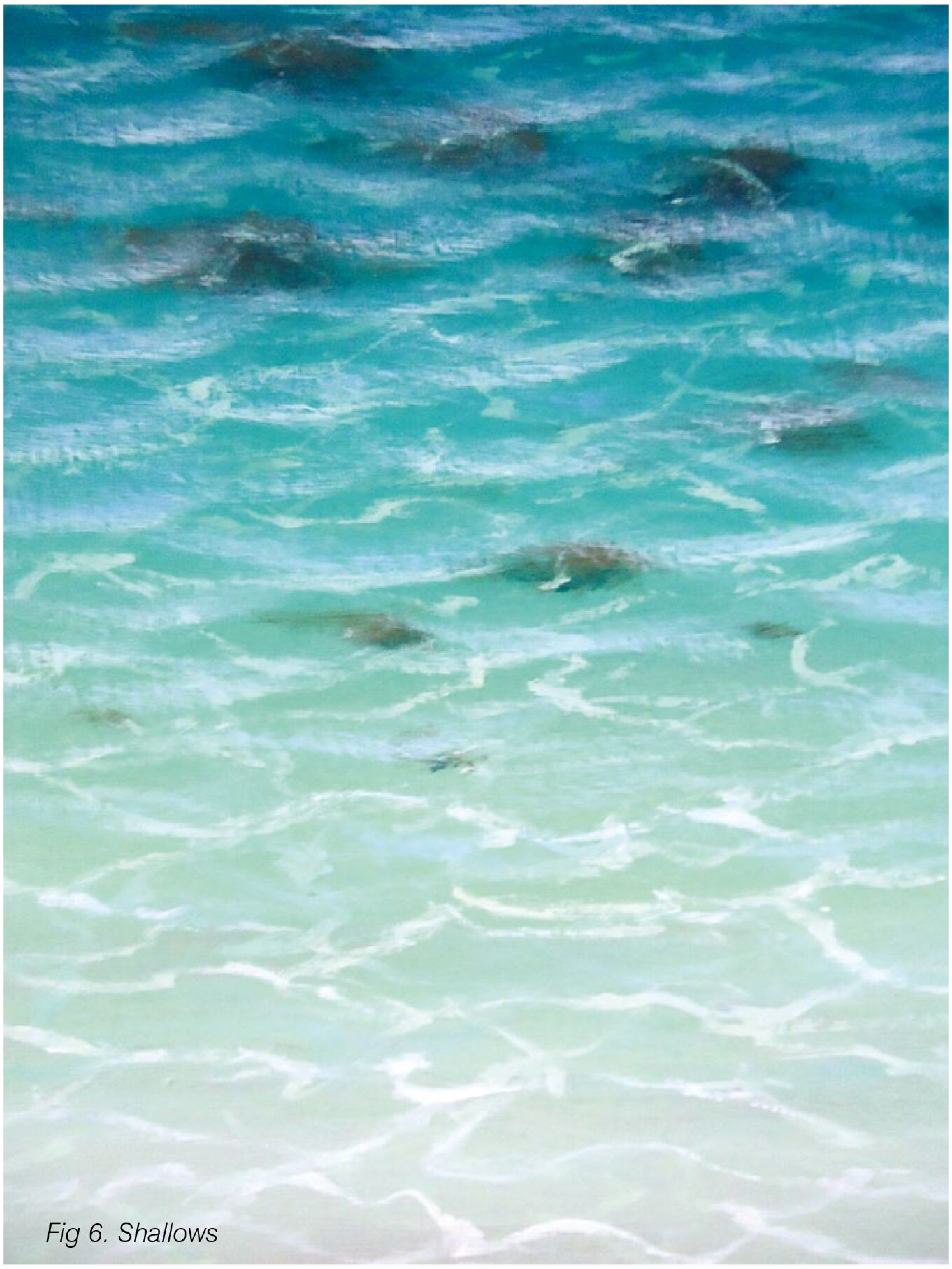


Fig 6. Shallows

Fig 1. Gradation

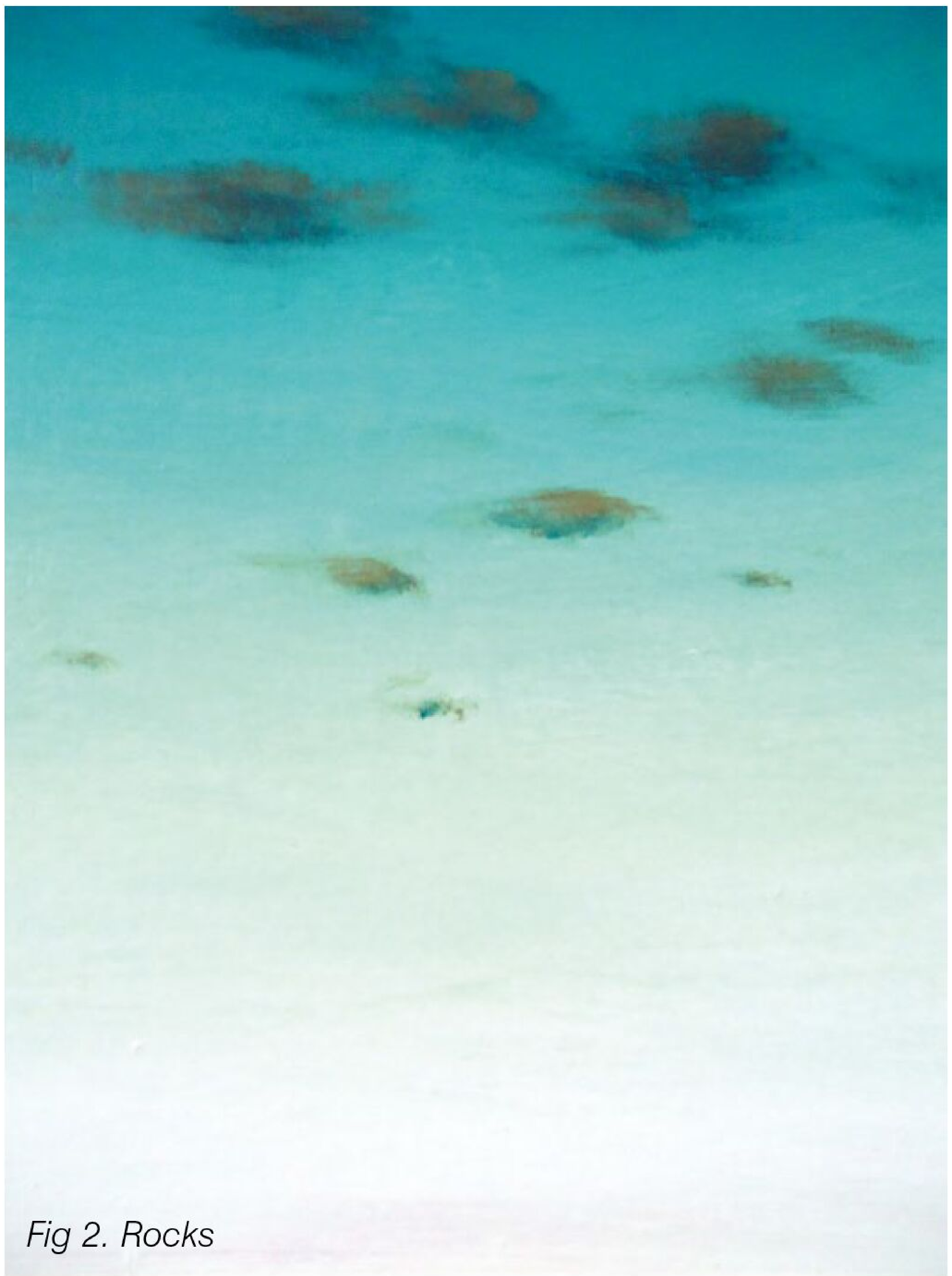


Fig 2. Rocks

think about painting water, you might want to consider my DVD "Water Fundamentals". As a special offer, Back to Basics readers can have a discount on our DVD tutorial 3 pack. Visit www.explore-acrylic-painting.com/AP-discount.html or see our ad in this magazine.

This article is primarily about brush technique, but as usual I like to hide learning in some fun.

Before we start with our brushwork exercises, the first thing is to consider that the appearance of water is made up of four elements:

- The Substrate (ie sand, rocks etc) Colour of the Water (what it's carrying)
- The Shapes of the Surface of the Water (waves, ripples etc)
- The Light

Again, before we start, I would like to suggest that as impatient creatures we tend to do our training on our paintings. Its a great idea, while building your confidence, to have a few blank canvases around to test things on. You can paint an aspect of a painting on a separate canvas, so you know what you are doing before committing to a "serious" piece.

Let's get into our first exercise:
In one of the previous articles I mentioned that one of the functions of a paintbrush is to pick up large amounts of paint and move it around. This could be for blocking in, or more subtle effects like gradations of colour, as examples.

Using your paintbrush in the same way you would use a house brush (that is, good coverage), we are going to prepare a small canvas, representing shallow clear water on a sunny day.

Colours:

- Pthalo Blue
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- White

> "Its a great idea, while building your confidence, to have a few blank canvases around to test things on. You can paint an aspect of a painting on a separate canvas, so you know what you are doing before committing to a "serious" piece."

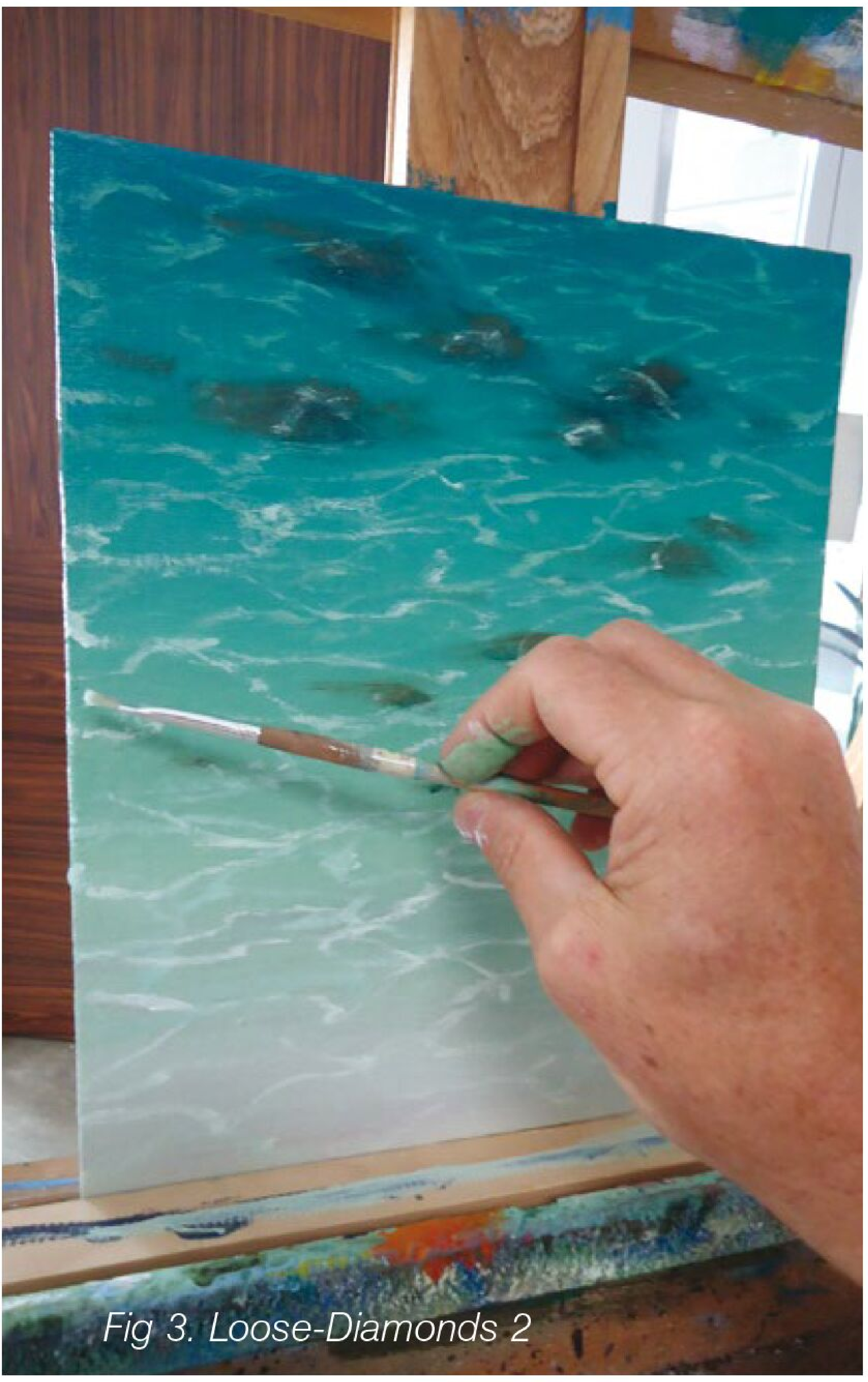


Fig 3. Loose-Diamonds 2

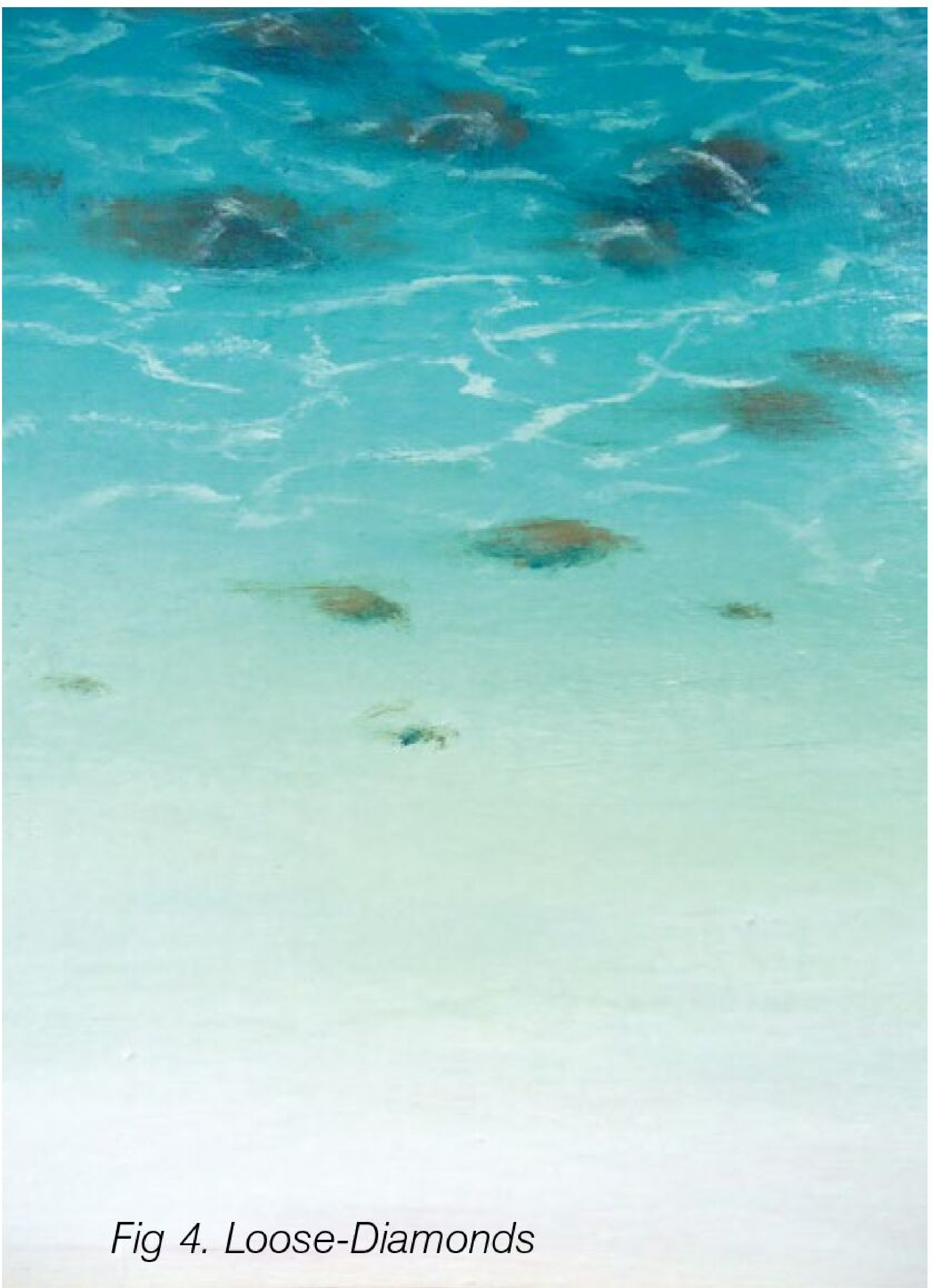


Fig 4. Loose-Diamonds

We want to represent each of the elements, and we need to do this efficiently. We could just paint the substrate and then add layers of thin glazes to represent the colour of the water. Te-di-ous. We want to develop our gradation skills anyway, and it is much easier to paint the substrate (sand for example) and create the illusion of differing depths with a gradation of colour.

To do this we'll scoop up a large amount of a mixture of this colour, and with a large-ish chisel brush (ie size 10 or bigger), do a gradation down the canvas, each time adding more Cadmium Yellow Light and White to your mix. To create the appearance of very shallow water, I added a tiny touch of Dioxazine Purple to a mixture that is predominantly White, with a bit of Cadmium Yellow Light. Use lots of paint and lay it down with a "crosshatch" motion, one change of colour roughly blending into the next. Use a soft touch and the tip of the brush to soften the transitions between the paint colours. (See Fig 1. Gradation)

Preparing the canvas to this point will reinforce a very important skill. Painting a controlled gradation of colour/s is something even accomplished artists struggle with.

Exercise Two:

Add some rocks under the water. You'll need:

- Alizarin
- Pthalo Blue
- A very soft touch
- A very dry brush

You are now about to investigate one of my favourite techniques. Dry brushing is a very non-committal way of introducing colours and elements. Mix your colour. Take most of the paint out of your brush (and I mean most!), test it on your spare canvas and make some roughly elliptical marks. Start with small "touches" and build as you go. As you come into the shallow water, add a touch of Burnt Umber and Cadmium Yellow Medium to "shallowify" the rocks. (See Fig 2 Rocks)

Exercise Three:

The next part of this process is to represent the refraction of light on the substrate. This is not an easy thing, however a technique I have developed makes it easier. You need to allow your brush to be controlled in an uncontrolled way. What the?! It will make sense!

Find a spare canvas to practice this skill. Grab a small chisel brush size 4 or 6 and load it with paint. Make this pattern – you will need to roll your brush between your fingers whilst pushing it backwards and forwards horizontally, creating extremely loose & wobbly diamond shapes. Allow the brush to make its own way, to a certain extent. (See Fig 3. Loose-Diamonds 2)

This represents the light which is refracted by the surface of the water, down onto the substrate. Be aware that if you wish to create the illusion of distance then you must adjust the size of the "diamonds" as they recede into the distance. Important – you need to be aware also, when applying this technique, the refraction will alter colour as it goes into deeper water. (See Fig 4. Loose-Diamonds-2)

When you have experimented with this and feel comfortable with the results, you can then apply this to your exercise. This exercise requires a certain amount of confidence with your brush. Too much paint and you'll end up with large blobs. Not enough paint, and you'll lose the "strength". Using the same technique, add a little Cadmium Yellow Medium to your Burnt Umber/ Alizarin/Pthalo Blue mix, and repeat this exercise over the rocks, accentuating this in the shallow water. This creates the illusion of the refraction process on the rocks as well as on the sand.

I love this technique, it's so versatile.

Developing this skill allows you to create wonderful random patterns. It can be used as tree branches and trunks; to create tendrils of vines, and the refraction of light. Magic. (See Fig 5. Diamonds)

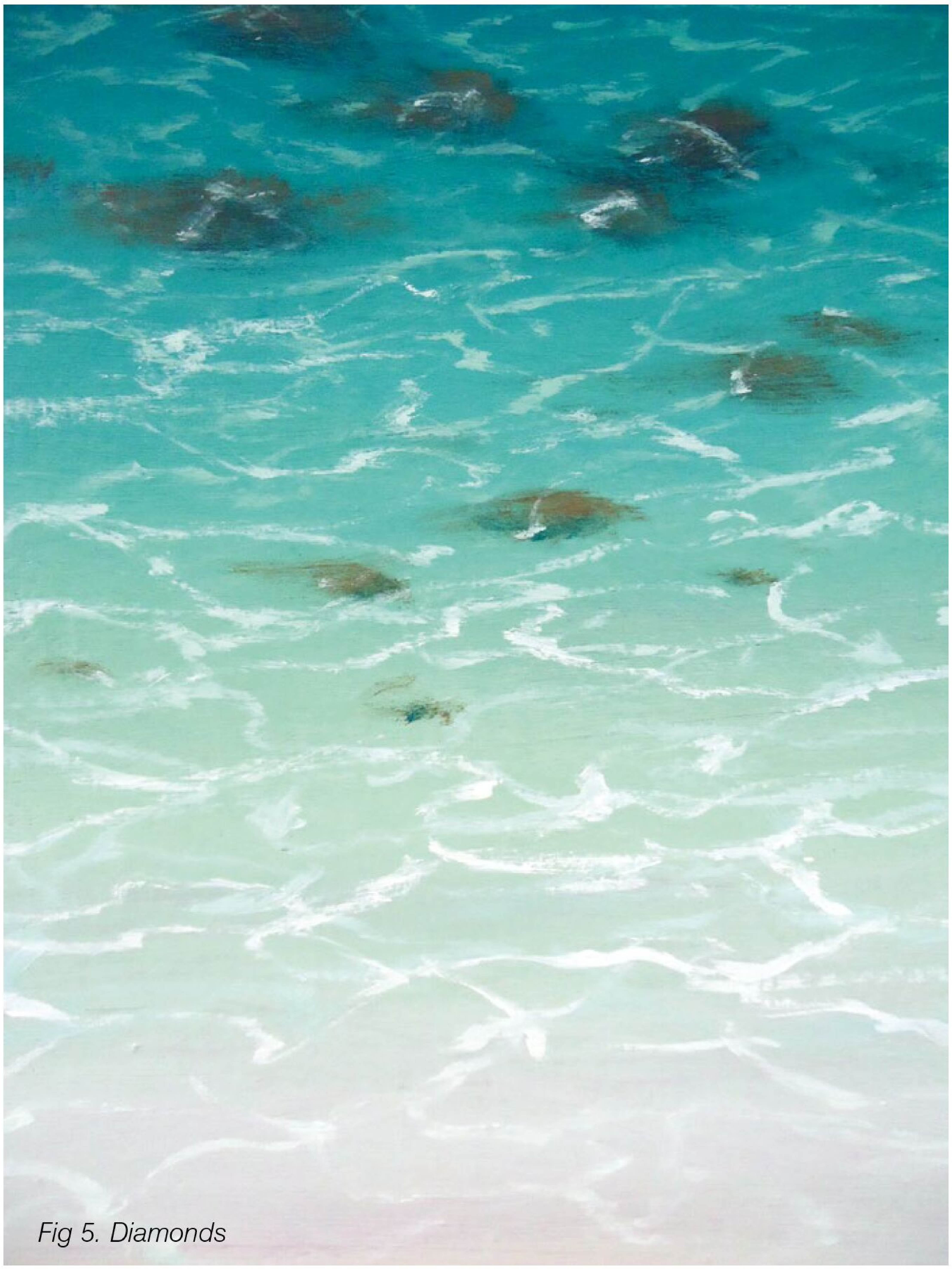


Fig 5. Diamonds

Exercise Four:

Back to the dry brush. You'll need:

- French Ultramarine Blue
- White

Now for the surface and the light. Thankfully, in this exercise, this is relatively easy – both elements can be painted with one technique.

When using acrylics, the next part is easier if your previous work is dry. Make sure you have a very dry brush (size 6 or 8) with the tiniest amount of pigment and make a series of very shallow W's. These W's represent the sky reflecting on the backs of the small waves.

Experiment first to make sure you have the right amount of paint on your brush.

They seem to sit above the substrate creating the illusion of depth.

Do not paint them neatly and in rows. They will look like a backdrop for a pantomime. They should look something like this. As you develop your confidence you can make this effect as complicated or as simple as you like. (See Fig 6. Shallows)

That's it! You have painted water. AND, investigated the possibilities of very simple applications of a paintbrush. Those of you who read the last article will notice some of the similarities in these techniques.

Spot on. They are very similar, and very simple. But there's a big difference between the pictures in the last article and this one. You could easily create a completely different image again, using these same techniques.

My approach is always to simplify. Simplifying means knowing exactly what limited brushes will do and build your skills from there. I know, I know, I've said it before! I promise I will move on from this, but I really want to emphasise how much scope you have to create magic by mastering the three above techniques, and in the process develop a good working relationship with your brushes.

In the next article, we will look at where different paintbrushes can fall down, and some common problems encountered (as well as some ways around these problems!). ■

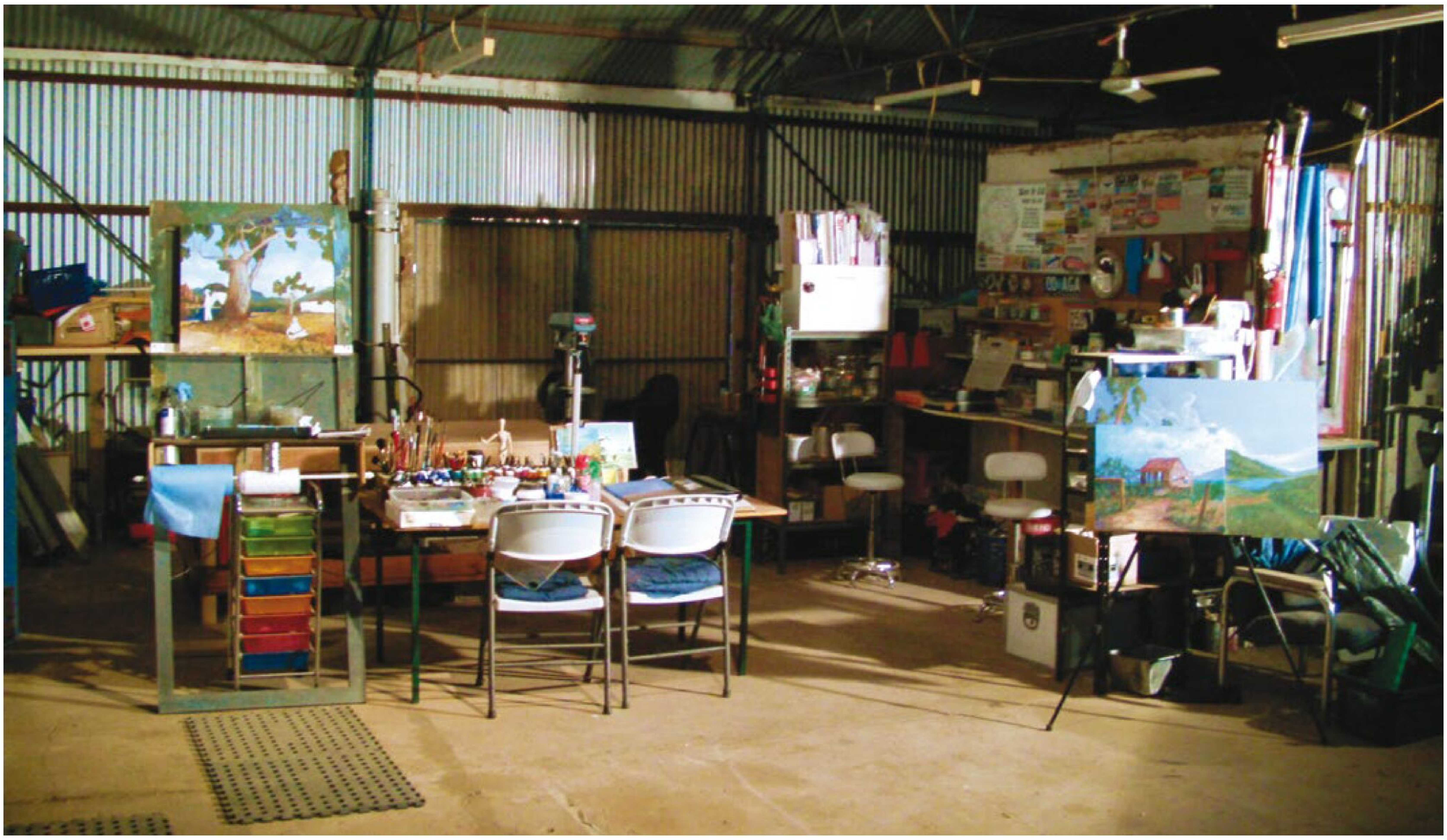
> "Be aware that if you wish to create the illusion of distance then you must adjust the size of the "diamonds" as they recede into the distance."

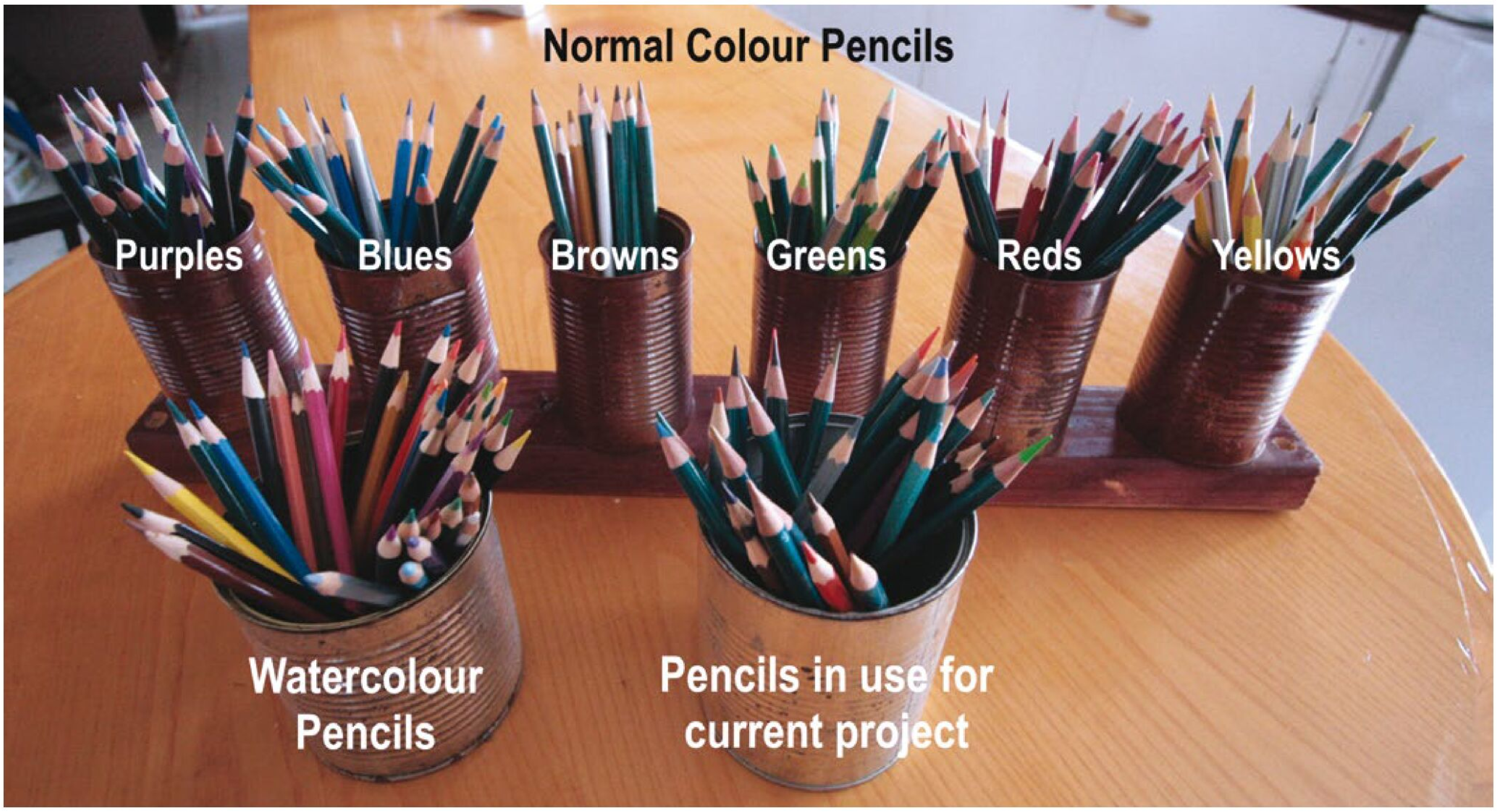
Setting up your Space

by Kevin Rogers

A long, long time ago in the land of brown robed Christian Brothers and black and white Nuns, I lived in a world of Times Tables, Logic, English Grammar and the monotonous repetition of historical dates and facts. In this world, Art took a back seat on a very long bus. It amazes me that Artists actually emerged from this uncultured fog and I was especially amazed that some of us could even hold a pencil after being continually ruler rapped across the knuckles or copping the strap across the hand on an unhealthy daily basis.

Because of this early 'educational' regimen I never had the opportunity to really appreciate art, as it was never accepted as a necessary part of life. It wasn't until 1970 when Art began to be accepted as part of school curriculum in Queensland and my 'mentor' was a teacher called David Kirwan, a wonderful tutor and a wonderful human being. It was a mixture of David and my older brother Ian that sparked my ability to draw into life. Ian could draw Walt Disney characters to perfection whereas David taught me techniques and the use of colour. Unfortunately the extent of my art studies ended in 1972 after only three years of secondary school teaching in art. At my school Art did not exist in years 11 and 12





and I could not pursue that subject even though I had success as an art student at State level in Year 10, so it was back into the fog I slid.

When I was 15 years of age, I found that music inspired my art and unfortunately Mum and Dad did not like my form of inspiration as they found the soothing beats of Black Sabbath too much to bear. In order to keep sanity in our family I was doomed to the outposts of empire… my Dad built another room under the house for me, he then supplied me with an old Stereogram, a desk, a chair and a cupboard for all my worldly belongings…I had set up my first "Space", even though there was the occasional banging of the foot on the floorboards above my head, I was in nirvana down there.

Since those salad days, I have always needed my 'Space' wherever I have lived. My wonderful wife and I have resided in every State and Territory in Australia and during my 20 years in the RAAF, we tended to move on a regular basis, however I always set up my 'Space' wherever we went.

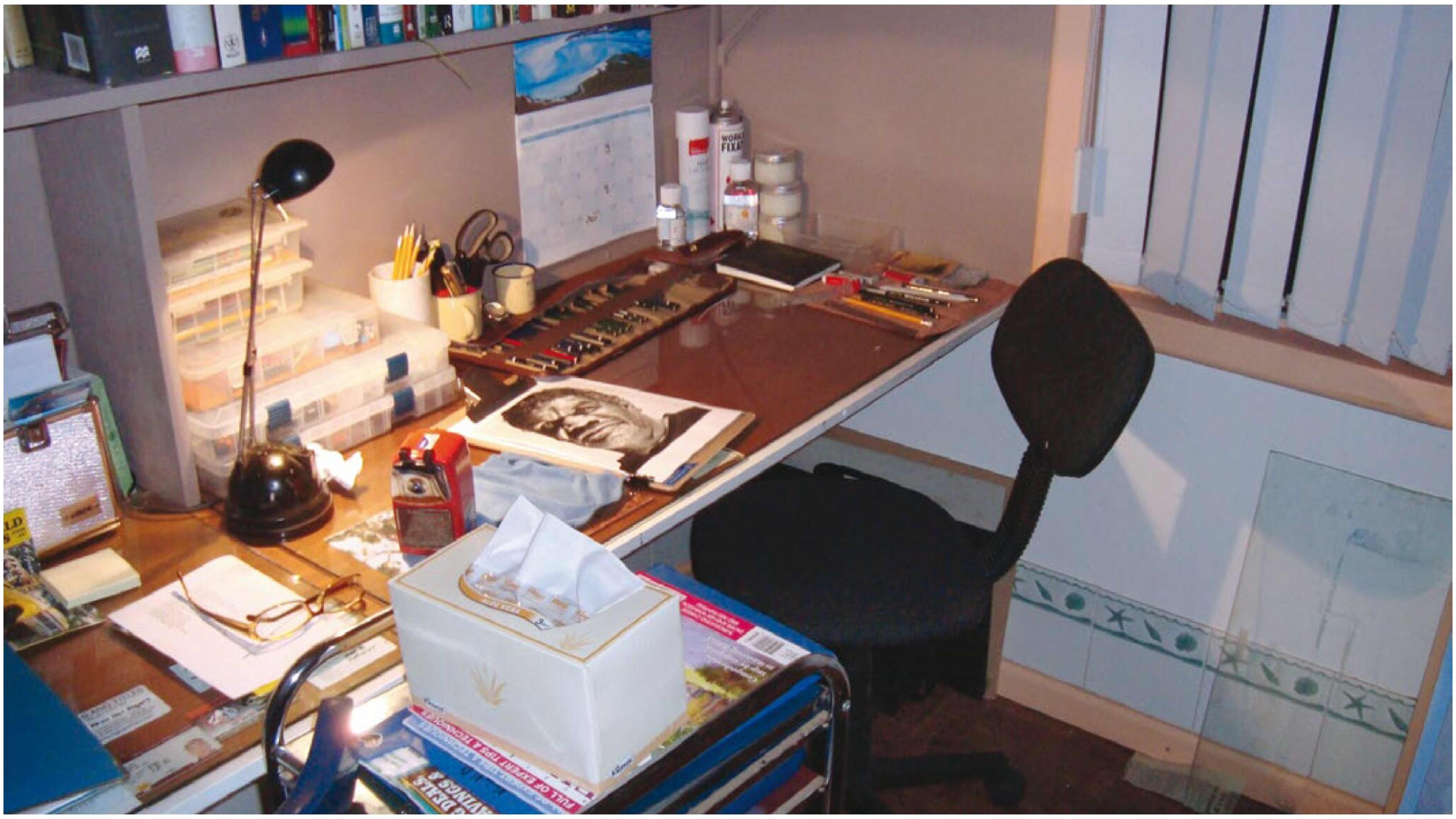
Space does not necessarily mean a 30 metre square shed as it just needs to be a quiet place where your imagination can run free, where the worries of the day dissipate and where you can simply recharge. Space does not have to be just one place either, as I have a space in my shed for painting during winter and it moves to my air-conditioned area during summer. When I draw, I like to sit on the front balcony with a large table and watch the world go by and in a town of less than ten residents, there is not much to distract me.

Now that I have explained what 'Space' can be, it is imperative your drawing equipment has a space itself too, so you don't take up living space used by the family, or if you do, you must make your drawing kit very portable. By portable, I mean your kit needs to packed up and moved within one minute and here is what I have done to make this happen, but firstly I need to explain what my 'kit' is and how it can fit into my 'space'.

My drawing kit comprises:
- A large drawing board (800mm x 600mm)
- A row of old Spaghetti cans for my coloured and watercolour pencils Empty Fruit Cans for the pencils I am using on the current artwork
- Plastic cases for storage of my 'peripherals' (Erasers,

"When I draw, I like to sit on the front balcony with a large table and watch the world go by."

Above: Pencil set up
Opposite page: Winter studio set up



Above: Summer Studio for Drawing
Below: Winter Space for Drawing

HINTS

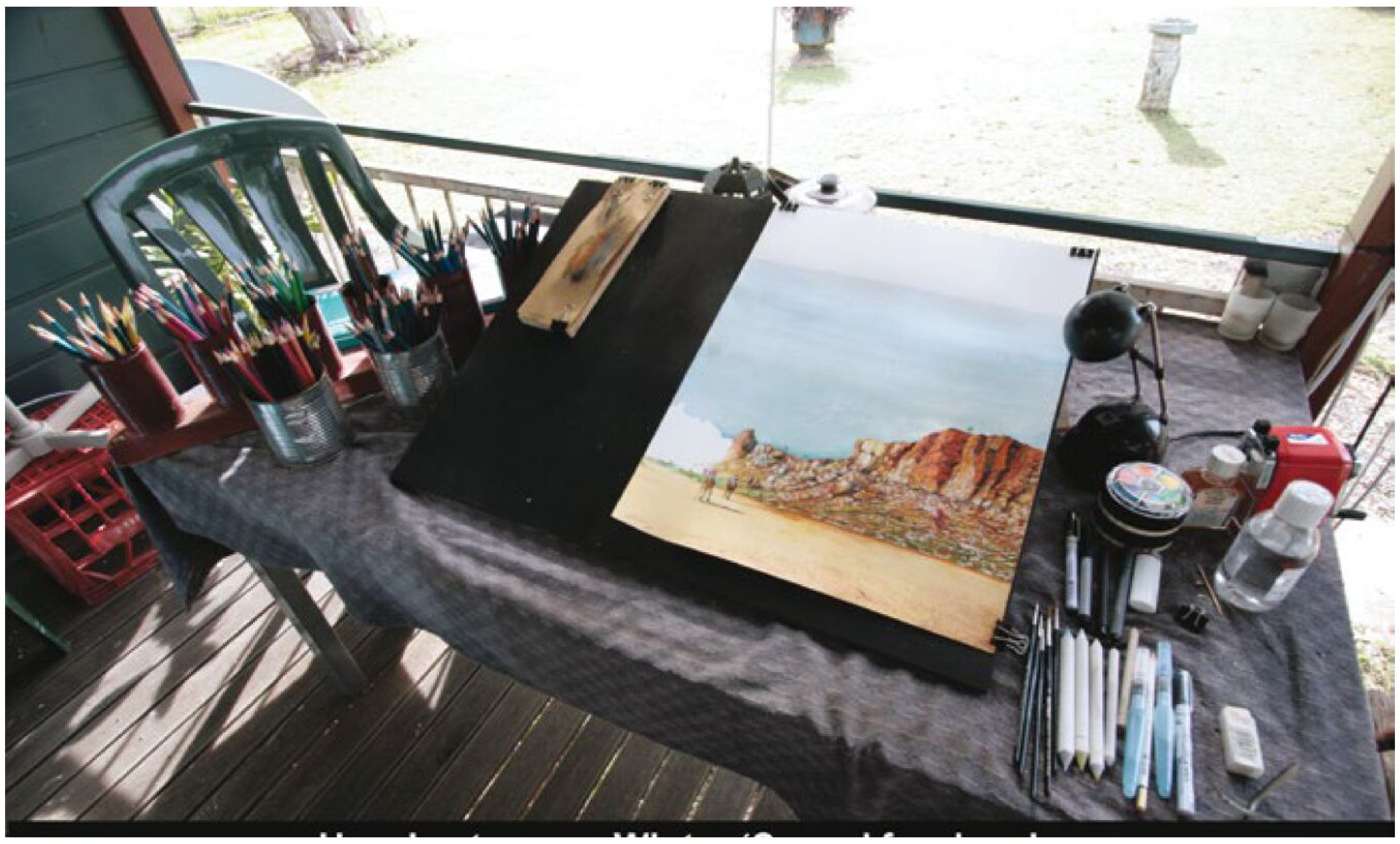
- Make sure your 'Space' is away from inspiration destroying distractions
- Make it simple and easy to relocate
- Put soft tissue paper in the bottom of your cans to keep your pencils from banging about
- Make your own drawing board out of MDF, 2 hinges and a can of spray paint, making sure you put some non slip matting on the edges.
- Put on your favourite music and draw your little pants off.

blending stumps etc)
- Pencil wrap for my graphites.

A Helix A5 pencil sharpener

As you can see by the photograph, I have screwed a few cans onto a board so rather than fumbling with a bunch of cans when I want to move them, all I have to do is pick up the board. I have separate cans for my watercolour pencils and whilst I am working on a project I employ one large can to put the pencils I am using into… this saves me rummaging around my tins for that specific colour and it also makes it easier to move at a moment's notice. So when you need to pack everything up just cover your artwork with a sheet of cardboard, lay the board flat and stack everything on top of it then move it to a safe place until you next get inspired to continue the work.

So here is your personal 'Space' regimen, so go forth and find yours. ■



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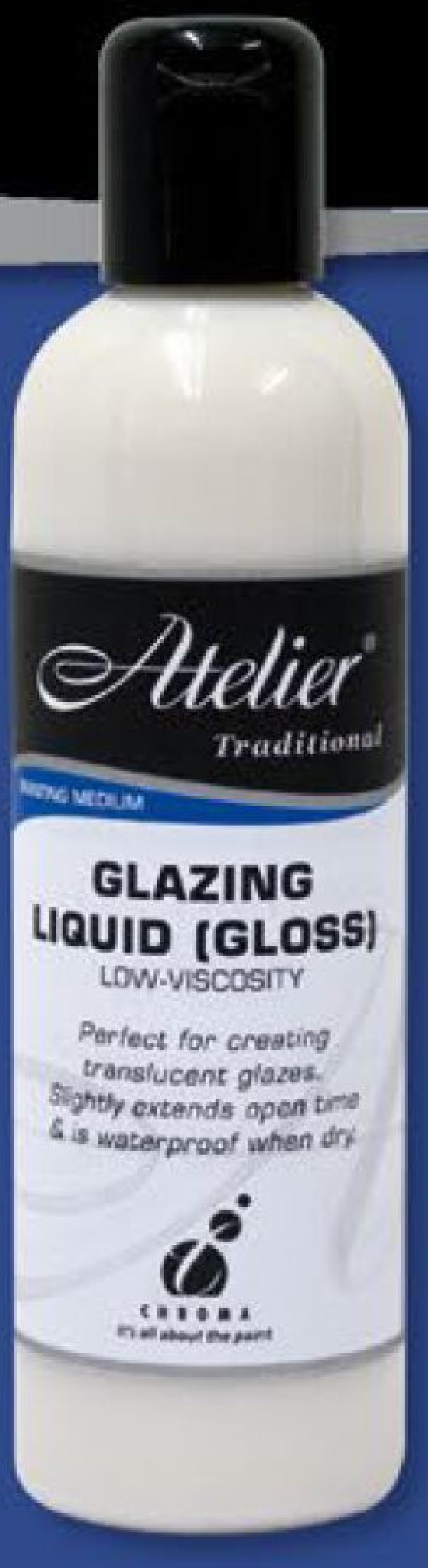
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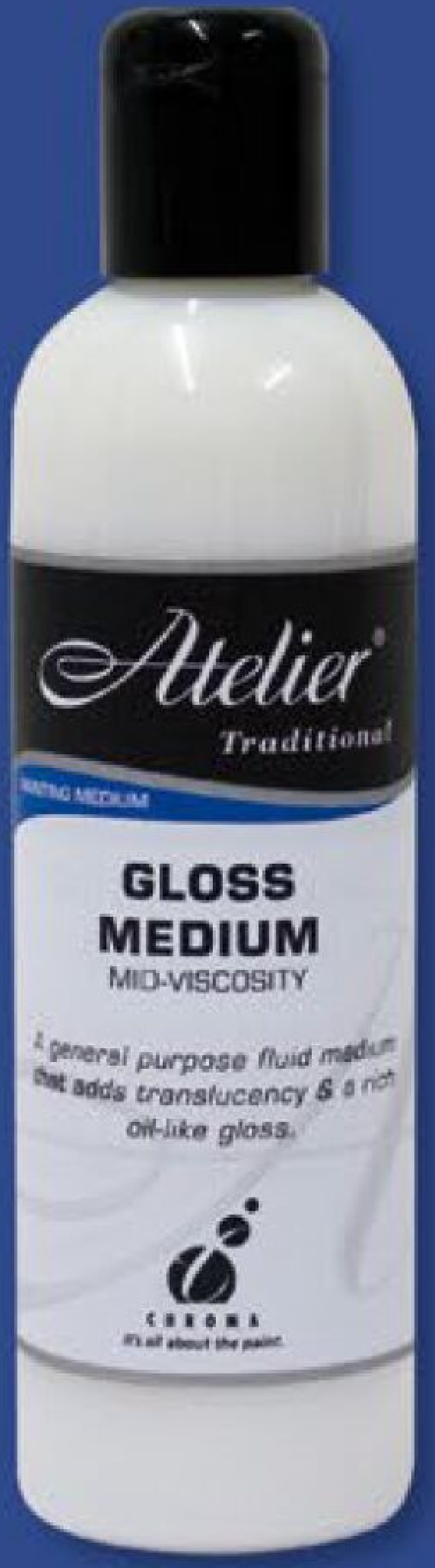
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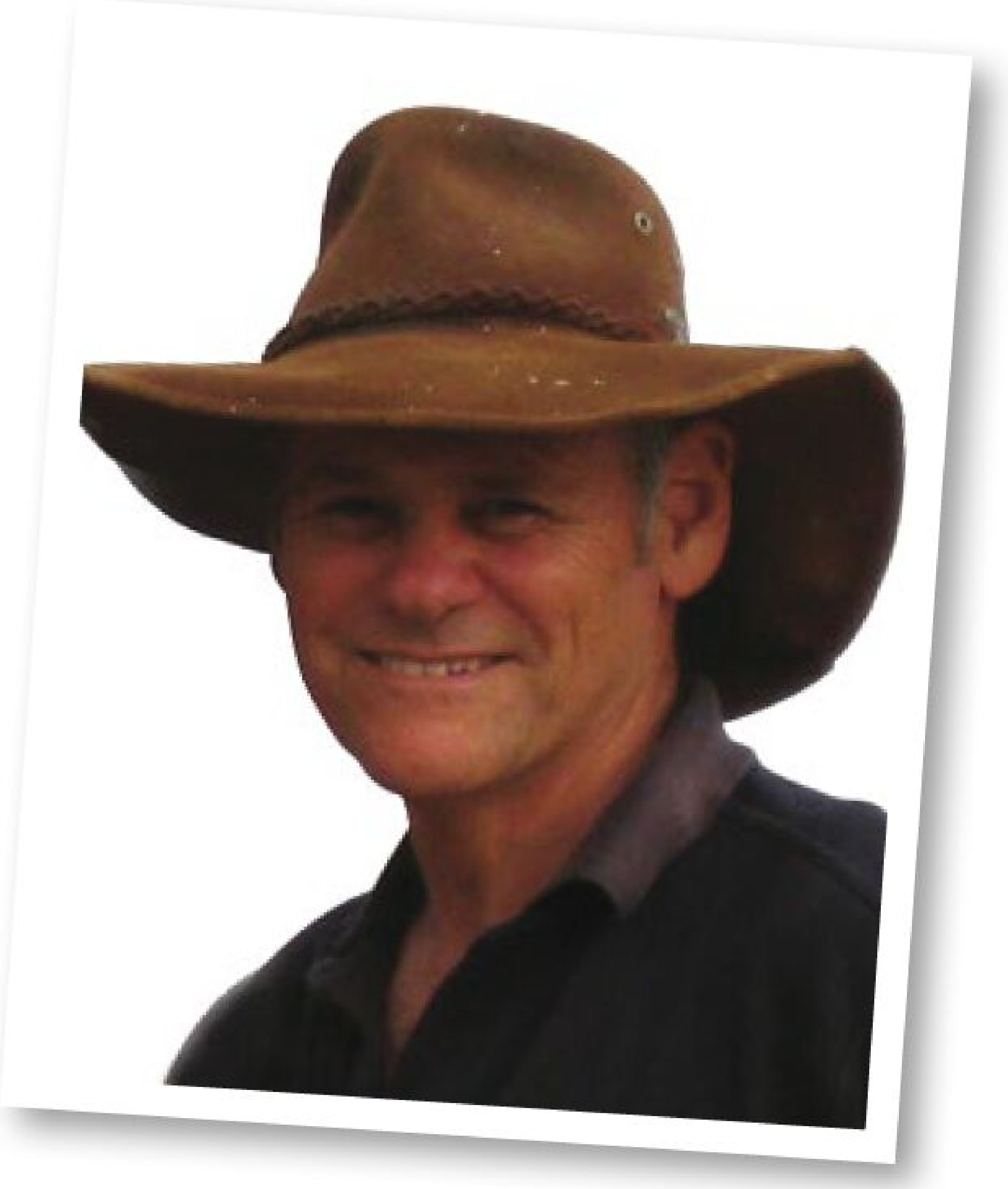
Making a Painting

By Phil Frankel



Greetings fellow artists.

In Issue 2-3, I posed the question "Is there a painting here?" I presented my thoughts as to why people express dissatisfaction with their end result of copying pictures; and why, no matter how good it turned out, it could never be entered in a competition, nor sold as an original artwork.

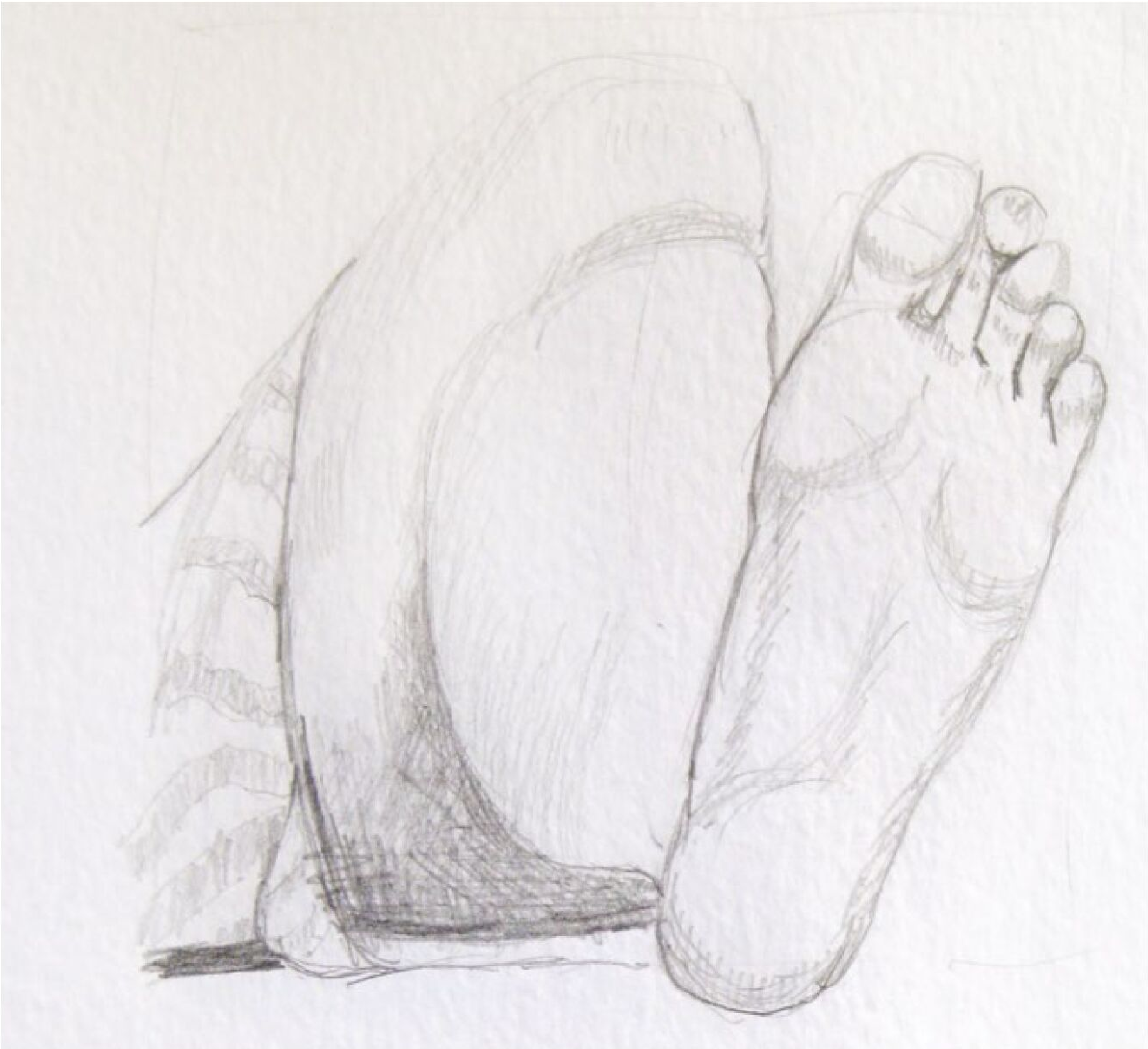
As an example of issues arising, that the artist must resolve, when creating an original work, I have written a two part article in which I will take you through my research; preliminary sketches; problems faced; and influences that shaped a painting I recently completed.

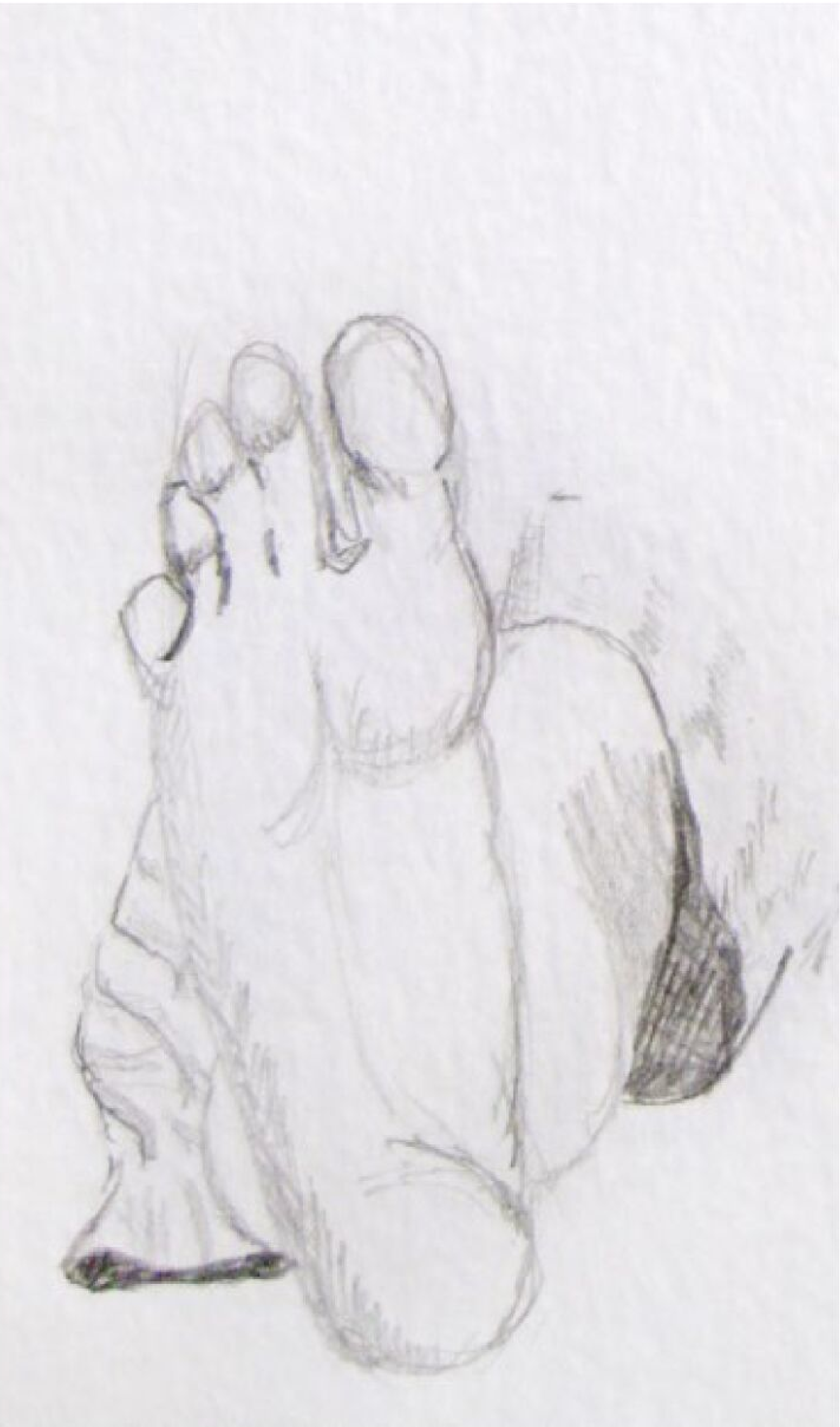
It brings together ideas I have been discussing since I began writing these articles. It also answers unequivocally, the question I posed some time ago, as to whether doing this art course has affected my painting style and process.

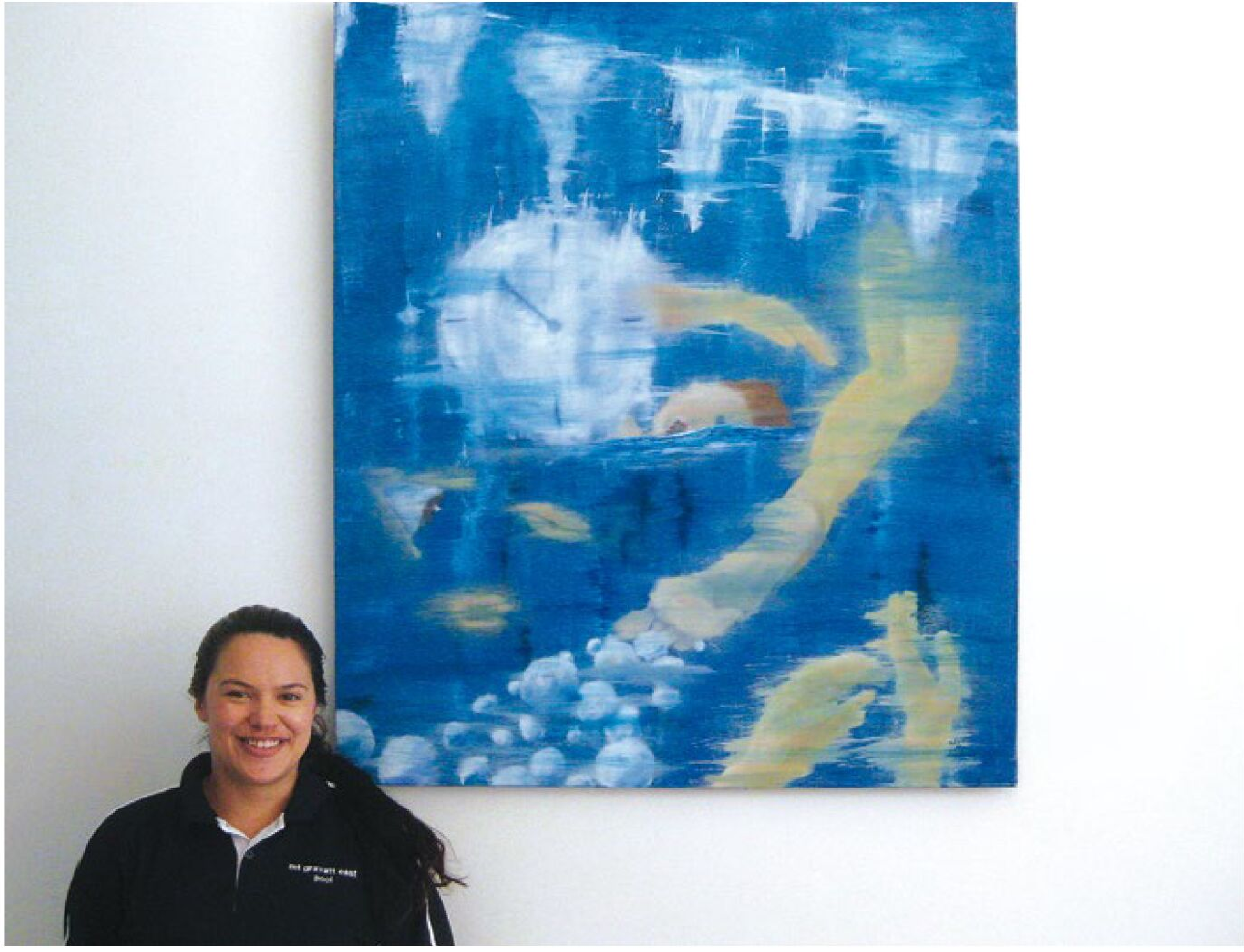
Background information

In 2010 I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of months in Africa. I spent almost a week of that time in Kruger National Park, and 3 or 4 days at Addo Elephant Park - taking huge numbers of photos. The rest of the time was spent in general sight-seeing, visiting art galleries, meeting people and a little bit of "R&R".

Since then I have had a vague idea in mind of a painting which







would reflect my experience there.

On three separate occasions I have drafted up ideas and sketches and had relevant photos printed, only to put them all aside. They always lacked that special something I needed to get my creative juice flowing, or, as in the most recent case, my rough sketch ended up looking more like an advertisement for a tour company, than something I wanted to paint.

Over the last year of study at Uni, our recommended artist research has included, amongst many others, Gerhart Richter. About a week ago, I stumbled across an interview with Gerhart Richter. During the podcast, we saw Richter creating one of his works. He used a metal scraper, about 1 metre long by 30cm wide to scrape paint back and forth, up and down on the canvas. Judging by the six or so steps he took, and his height, I would say the canvas was about four metres long by two to three metres high.

I instantly thought that the resultant blurred canvas would be an ideal vehicle for my Africa painting.

I intended to use a river and bush scene I had visited (and ate lunch near) as the background and didn't want it to intrude too much, nor detract from the animal heads I was going to focus on.

Inspiration comes

One morning I went for my usual swim, and as I turned to start the next lap, my goggles slipped, allowing a drop of water to seep in. I kept going, thinking I would adjust them at the end of the next lap. The further I went, the more the water leaked in, so as I turned to breathe on one particular occasion, the water got into my eye. I noticed the lines and reflections on the floor of the pool blurred, as did the flags above and the lane floats. AHA!!! Inspiration comes!!!

By the time I'd reached the end of the pool, my painting had started to evolve. No! not the Africa one, but one related to the triptych done earlier, and the title was quite clear – "The Swim". I continued with my swim, brainstorming ideas as I went.

Once I completed my laps, I asked the manager if she would be interested in hanging a large canvas (120cm x 102cm) on one of the walls. I already had a triptych hung there, so I figured that she would be amenable. At one point, mention was made of "a more modern painting".

Brainstorming

For those who do not know, brainstorming is the process whereby you create ideas. Many may be of no use to you, but by thinking laterally, you may trigger that special idea that makes your painting "great". I raced home and wrote down all the ideas I could remember thinking about as I swam. Once the initial thrust had slowed, I made a "cuppa" and allowed myself some "quiet" time. More ideas came and then I began

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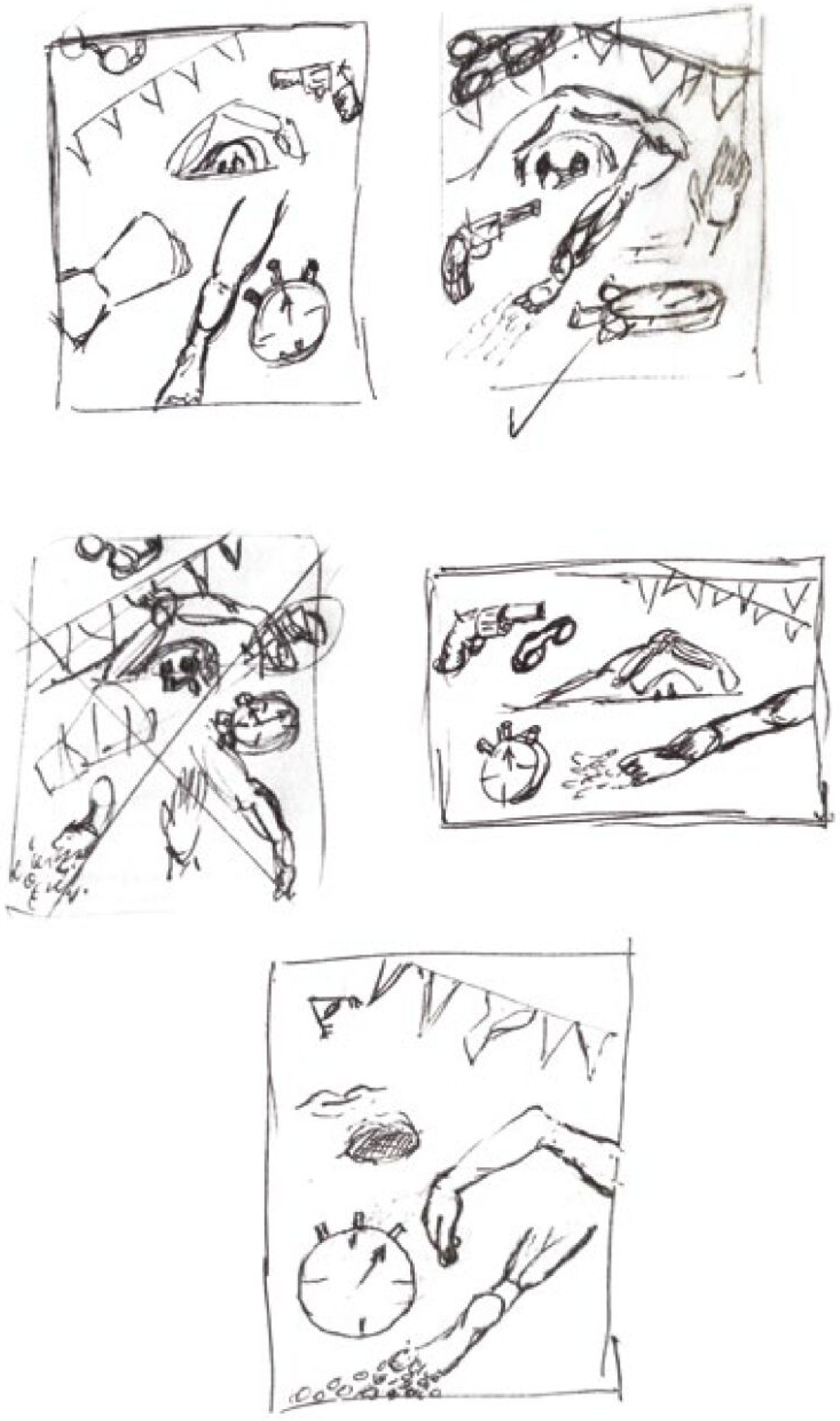
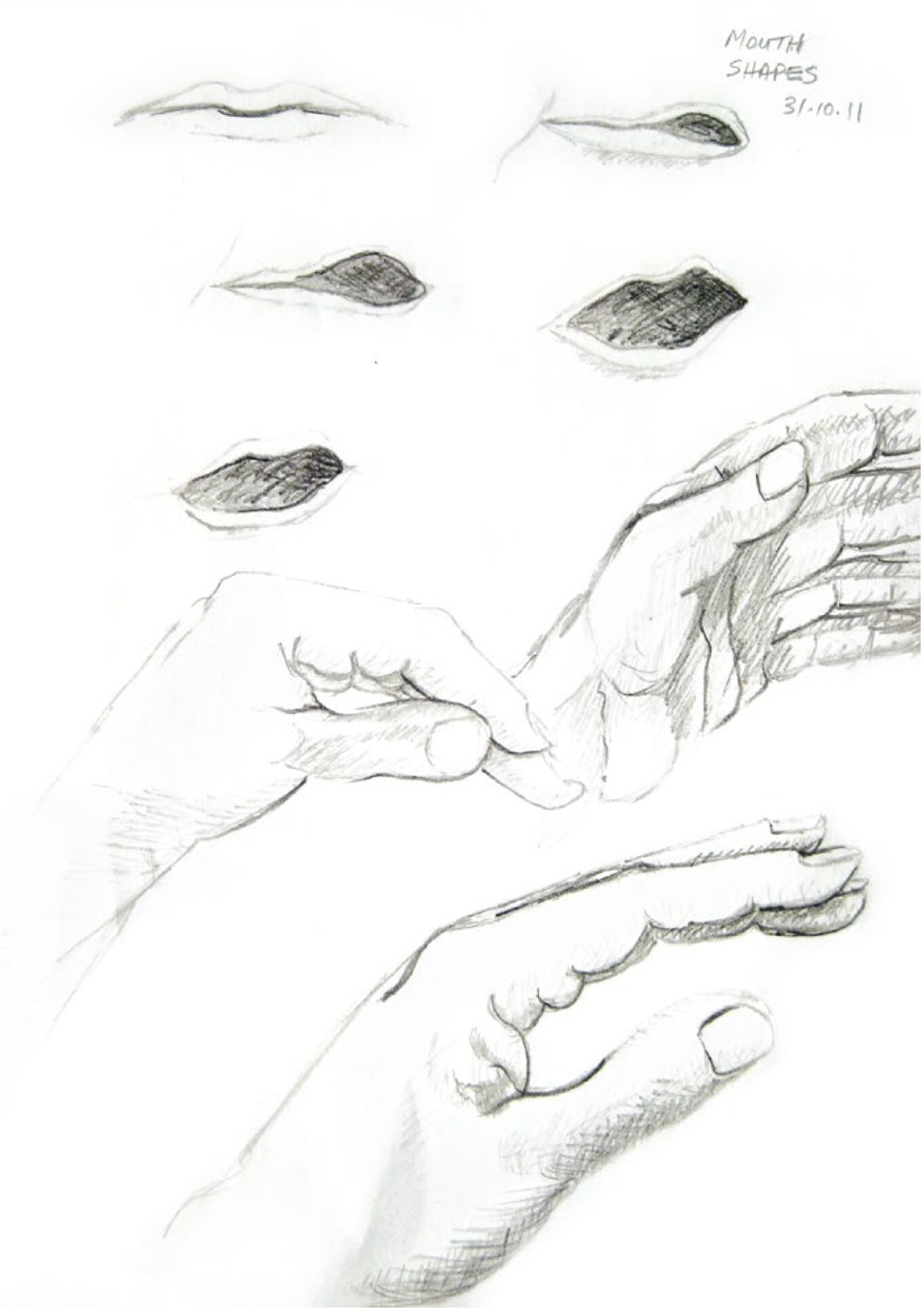
Above: The Swim
Below: Thumbnails
Opposite page: Foreshortened foot and leg, in different positions.





"piggy-backing" other ideas. Piggy-backing is the process of joining two ideas together. Woolworths trolleys were invented because someone joined the idea of carrying a basket of groceries and using a skateboard. (true story!, or so I am led to believe)

In my case, I have been racing the clock with my swimming, so I wanted to include a time measuring device. The old masters used an hour glass, or an old man with a beard to represent the passage of time. Salvador Dali was known for his melting clocks.

A second example of piggy-backing: the combination of the flags above the pool, which are used to stop competitors when a false start is declared, together with my racing the clock, brought the idea of including a starter's gun to mind.

Once I had exhausted these ideas, I used the critical thinking concept of PMI (plus, minus, interesting) to filter them. By discarding the minuses, the pluses had a good chance of being used, whilst the interesting ones could be used as "fillers" if needed.

Developmental thinking stages of the painting

At this point, I started sketching some thumbnails. The first one (shown here) was rejected because the line of the flags and an imaginary line through the leg come together as an arrow directing your eye out of the picture frame. In the second sketch, I changed the angle of the flags to stop this. I also shaped one flag as if it were fluttering in the breeze. The intention was to make it different, thus attracting the eye and leading it back into the picture .

You probably noticed in the first sketch, an hourglass shape on the left. My reasoning for including it is twofold.

First, as mentioned previously, the passage of time. This represents a) the year I have invested in

swimming to improve my health.
b) the time taken to swim
a set distance.

Secondly, it was my son who inspired me to start swimming. One day I was giving him a hug and he said … "Wow! You have a shoulder girdle at last". When I looked in the mirror later, I noticed I was starting to develop that highly prized and over rated "manly chest".

Like all the other swimmers in the pool, I enjoy breathing, and want to see the end of the pool so I don't bump my head. By the same token, I don't enjoy choking on breathed in water, so the issue to be resolved was "mouth open" or "mouth closed".

Next came what I call the "Picasso influence". I decided that I didn't really need the entire face. Abstraction and the Cubists brought to the fore, the idea that we don't have to paint what an artist friend of mine calls "pretty pictures". They stressed that we should concentrate on essential elements of what we want to depict, and the relationship of the parts is subordinate to that idea.

So, all I really needed was an eye, which I decided to symbolize (much like Picasso), and a mouth.

Breathing is more important than seeing, so I could enlarge the mouth and subordinate the eye, or have one eye and several mouths depicting stages of the breathing process whilst swimming.

Next, the arms and the legs needed thinking about. As far as swimming is concerned, the leg is merely a system of levers, and the muscles provide the necessary force to move the foot giving propulsion and bubbles (which relate back to breathing).

Decision: subordinate the leg, enlarge the foot, show some bubbles.

It is very hard to draw the back of your foot when your head is in it's normal position, so I sat in front of a mirror and sketched a foreshortened foot and leg, in different positions. I also pulled lots of funny faces and sketched my mouth in different shapes.

I was now able to do more thumbnails and come up with a final concept. Remember, nothing in art is fixed until you decide you've finished. I recall reading once that Tom Roberts bought back one of his paintings, so he could relocate a tree he wasn't happy with.

So, when I say "final", I mean that I have reached a point I am satisfied with, at that point in time.

Compositionally, I wanted the eye to be led into the picture by the lighter coloured bubbles, follow the leg up to the flags, then run along the line of the flags till it hit the "odd one out". It would then be directed along the imaginary line of the flag, down to the light coloured clock, pick up the swimmer and go around the centre of the painting.

Because the clock is so important, as mentioned previously, it should be one of the lightest areas, painted against a darker background, and positioned on or near the junction of thirds.

The next stage was to think about colours. I had decided on a portrait format, based on my thumbnails, so I thought I could emulate Egyptian art, children's art and Oriental art in that I would use the top of the canvas to represent the distant end of the pool. I therefore decided on a cool Prussian Blue for the top, grading down to a warm Ultramarine at the base of the canvas. I didn't want the colours to be fully saturated, so I would have to add a little of their complementary colour. To create the effect of aerial perspective, I would also need to add a little white to the mix. Finally, to represent the lane floats, lines, and reflections on the bottom of the pool, I will vertically streak the same three colours.

In part two, I will discuss the painting process I followed; problems that arose, and how I resolved them; and how the painting itself dictated modifications to my initial planning.

Until next time, happy painting.
Philfr

FOR YOUR INFO

About the Author
Having finished my working career and now being retired, I started to paint seriously, and liked it.

I always thought I could paint, despite criticism of my early attempts whilst working, raising a family, etc. This year I decided to immerse myself; to make myself as good an artist as I can be, by enrolling in a Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art and Visual Culture) at Curtin University.

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